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# Macc attack

In Sport98: Derek Potter interviews Macclesfield manager, Sammy McIlroy

Chancellor stands by Treasury forecasts and speaks of 'necessary slowdown' □ Both sides of industry urge early interest rate cut

## UK will avoid recession, says Brown

Larry Elliott and Mark Addinson

**T**HE Chancellor, Gordon Brown, last night expressed confidence that the economy is on course to avoid a damaging recession despite pleas from both sides of industry for a cut in interest rates going unheeded at the Bank of England yesterday.

In an interview with the Guardian that coincided with

the Bank's decision to leave the cost of borrowing unchanged at 7.5 per cent, Mr Brown said the economy was witnessing a "justifiable and necessary slowdown" but that he could see no signs that growth would grind to a halt.

"I am confident that we are on track to avoid recession", the Chancellor said, sticking to Treasury forecasts of two per cent growth this year and 1.75 per cent in 1999. "The economy is performing as we expected it to do."

The Bank's decision to

leave interest rates on hold followed accumulating evidence that the downturn in manufacturing — which accounts for a quarter of the economy — is spreading to the service sector.

City analysts now believe that the next move in interest rates will be down following the six increases since Labour came to power — unless the pound goes into free fall on the foreign exchanges over the coming weeks.

The Bank's quarterly analysis of the outlook for inflation

will be published next week, and the City said the failure of the nine-strong Monetary Policy Committee to raise rates suggested that the recent moderation in growth meant the Government was on course to hit its 2.5 per cent target.

"The chances are rates have now peaked... if policy is not on track, this begs the question of why rates have not been changed", said Michael Saunders, UK economist at Salomon Smith Barney.

The Bank's decision was greeted with undisguised relief by both sides of industry, but there was disappointment that the MPC had left the door open for further increases later in the year.

"We urgently need a cut in interest rates or at the very least a clear signal that they have peaked", said Ian Brinkley, senior economist at the TUC. "Otherwise there is a very real danger of a hard landing for the economy."

Ian Peters, deputy director-general of the British Cham-

bers of Commerce, warned that manufacturing industry was dangerously close to the brink of a recession with more job losses and company closures. "In September the MPC must cut rates by a quarter per cent."

The shadow Chancellor, Francis Maude, said that Mr Brown's plans to increase public spending by 2.75 per cent a year for the rest of the parliament was stoking up inflationary pressure.

Rejecting the charge, Mr Brown blamed the need for

the current slowdown on the inflationary legacy inherited from the Tories.

"It was a great pity that the Bank wasn't made independent six months before the last election, so that we could have avoided the inflationary problems caused by the last Conservative government."

"We have got to move from the short-termism of sports of growth followed by deep recessions to a more steady pattern. I will give the new system all the support it needs."

Declaring that his aim was to break Britain's boom-bust cycle, the Chancellor repeated his warning that a failure to exercise pay moderation could trigger further tough action from the Bank. Looking ahead, he said the challenge for the Government in the next Budget was to take steps to improve Britain's productivity performance, which lags behind most of its major competitors.

Chancellor stands firm, page 15

## Probation service to get tough new image

Alan Travis Home Affairs Editor

**T**HE probation service is expected to be re-branded as the Public Protection Service in an attempt to banish its "too tolerant" image as part of the most radical shake-up in its 90-year history, the Home Office announced yesterday.

Probation officers are to lose their key role of "assisting or befriending" offenders as first set out in 1907 in a package designed to ensure that alternatives to prison are seen as rigorous punishments which protect the public.

Home Office officials have already started to talk of developing a national "corrections" policy to cover probation and prisons issues but have rejected this American term for the whole probation service. A plan to merge the prison and probation services has also been rejected.

The Home Office Minister, Lord Williams of Mostyn, said the new name was needed to make it clearer what the organisation did and dispel the impression that people given community sentences were "walking free" from court. Preferred options are the Public Protection Service or the Community Justice Enforcement Agency.

The Civil Service review proposing the shake-up is considering even more cumbersome titles, including the Offender Risk Management Service, the Justice Enforcement and Public Protection Service and even the Napoleonic-sounding Public Safety and Offender Management Service.

It is all a far cry from the 19th century origins of probation officers as "police court missionaries".

The Home Office also intends to rename court orders such as community service and probation orders.

The consultation document published yesterday acknowledges that probation is a long

established concept, but said the terms used were often mistakenly associated with tolerance of crime — probation was seen as a conditional reprieve.

Community service sounded like a voluntary activity while some terms such as "throughcare" were too esoteric to be understood by the public.

Ministers propose to replace the 54 separate locally run probation services with a national agency with 42 areas sharing the same geographical boundaries as the local police and crown prosecution services.

This would end local probation committees and place the service under the "arm-length" management of the Home Office through a Whitehall agency similar to the Prison Service Agency.

The Association of Chief Probation Officers supported the modernisation of the service but warned of the pitfalls of centralisation, and said the name should not be changed without better evidence of the benefits.

"The advantages of a national service will be in giving community sentences greater consistency, a national identity and the possibility of more resources. We would also have a more direct relationship with the Home Secretary," said Harold Lockwood, association chairman.

"The possible pitfalls are that centralisation is often a prelude to top-heavy bureaucracy and encroachment on local control." He said a MORI opinion poll to test the proposed names had shown few of the suggestions were popular.

"Renaming organisations has an unfortunate history and the public is currently very attuned to any whiff of 'spin-doctoring'. They would prefer our reputation to be based on the substance of our work, not a cosmetic makeover," he said.

Decca Aitkenhead, page 12



Michelle De Bruin... expected to appeal against the ban that effectively ends her career. 'Emotionally it's a huge blow'

PHOTOGRAPH BY BILLY STICKLAND

## De Bruin banned and branded a cheat

Duncan Mackay and Rory Carroll

**M**ICHELLE De Bruin, the Irish swimmer who as Michelle Smith came from nowhere to claim three Olympic swimming gold medals for Ireland in 1996, was yesterday found guilty by the international swimming governing body of manipulating a drugs test.

It found that she tampered with her urine sample at her home in Kells, Co Kilkenny, on January 10 by adding whiskey, suggesting an attempt to mask the presence of banned drugs, such as anabolic steroids.

The 28-year-old De Bruin escaped a life ban but the four-year suspension will end her career, ruling her out of the 2000 Sydney Olympics. The

only route left open to De Bruin is to appeal to the Court for Arbitration for Sport in Lausanne, who have the power to lift the ban.

She is expected to announce plans to appeal in Dublin today.

The decision has stunned the Irish public, who only two years ago were celebrating the triumph of their first Olympic swimming champion who had spent so long among the shoals of also-rans.

But sceptics felt her astonishing advance so late in her career was too good to be true. The chequered past of De Bruin's Dutch husband and coach Erik De Bruin, a former discus thrower who in 1993 had been banned for four years after a positive drugs test, had added to the suspicion.

Jim McDaid, Ireland's sports minister, said yesterday the decision was a personal tragedy for De Bruin and her family. He was saddened and disappointed but hoped she would be able to clear her name.

Tom Humphries, an Irish Times sports writer whose articles from Atlanta questioning De Bruin's innocence were spiked, said: "It's a very difficult thing for people to react to. They invested largely in celebrating in 1996 and reacted furiously to any questions which were asked of her — about how she came about her improvement. Emotionally it's a huge blow. I think people will be disillusioned."

At the Atlanta Olympics, President Bill Clinton rallied to De Bruin's cause, telling her he was full of admiration for her swimming and the

way she had dealt with "all that crap from the media".

Tim Wyatt, president of the Ulster branch of the Irish Amateur Swimming Association, said: "It is very sad and very disappointing. The whole of Irish swimming is undergoing a review at the moment and that will lead to far reaching changes."

"She was swimming's golden girl and now she's tarnished. It is extremely disappointing. I think we will see drug testing increase in profile."

Vast sums of money were predicted from sponsors eager to be associated with a woman from a country with no Olympic-sized 50 metre pool. But the gold medals did not bring the expected riches.

After failing to make herself available for a drugs test in October 1996, she was warned the following Febru-

ary she faced a four-year ban if she missed another test.

De Bruin suffered neck and back injuries in a car accident in Ireland last October which disrupted her training schedule and prompted her to pull out of this year's World Championships in Perth, Australia, where China's swimmers were embroiled in a succession of doping scandals.

But when the controversy was at its height in Perth, dope testers called on De Bruin for the out-of-competition test which led to the decision announced yesterday.

De Bruin was the second Olympic gold medalist from Atlanta to be banned within two weeks. Last week America's Randy Barnes, the Olympic shot-put champion, was suspended after testing positive for a banned drug for the second time in his career.

## Is this the proof that Arthur was real?

continued from page one

Pater Collavitt Artgrov, which Charles Thomas, an expert on Tintagel and inscriptions of the period, translates as "Artgrov, father of a descendant of Coll, has had this made, or built."

Professor Morris hopes to return next season to excavate the site where he believes the house from which the stone originally came can be found. It is even possible he may find more of the inscription.

The earliest reference to Arthur dates back to the ninth century and the first association with Tintagel came from the writings of the 12th century Welsh author, Geoffrey of Monmouth.

Most of the best-known legends — of Arthur's tutor Merlin the Magician, his betrayal by Queen Guinevere and his friend Lancelot, the magic sword Excalibur and his death at Avalon — come from Sir Thomas Malory in his 15th century chronicle *Le Morte d'Arthur*, or from Tennyson's 19th century *The Idylls of the King*.

The legend says that Arthur was born at Tintagel after his father King Uther Pendragon raped or seduced Igraine, the lady of the castle he was besieging. One legend has Merlin finding the abandoned baby on the beach below the castle.

Dr Walnwright said yesterday that although the first association of Arthur with Tintagel was only recorded in the 12th century, the new link was not to be dismissed. "Arthur fought the English, and won at least 12 battles, but he lost the war and eventually the English took over the country. Undoubtedly memories of him survived in the folk memory and manuscript sources until the 12th century."

The find has caused jubilation in the village, with its Merlin tea rooms and King Arthur's pub. It is still entirely dependent on Arthurian tourism. Gandalph, born David Strutt and now Arthurian re-enactor, proprietor of the Dragon's Breath shop and parish councillor, said: "This will be a shot in the arm to the community, but the stone must stay here and not in a museum in Truro."

The man who found the stone, Professor Morris, is tremendously excited by the discovery but deeply sceptical about the myth of King Arthur. To him the excitement is that it is the first inscription ever found on a secular site of that date. He is resigned to the fact that this is not how his great discovery will be remembered.

"As the stone came out, when I saw the letters A-R-T, I thought uh-oh..."

## Four confused young people trapped inside their own egos

### Review

Michael Billington

Happy Savages

Lyric Studio, Hammermith

**P**ATRICK Marber has a lot to answer for. The success of *Closer* seems

to be spawning a new genre about the emotional hell of mixed foursomes. But where Marber's play acts as a metaphor for modern isolation, Ryan Craig's *Happy Savages* simply shows us four young people trapped inside their own egos.

First, we meet Ben, an embryonic dramatist working on a play about the Holocaust, and his uneasy partner, Lisa, a

management consultant. Then, we encounter Joe, Ben's best buddy and a divorced lawyer in York, who lives with a hairdresser called Rachel, who arouses her lover by appearing naked except for a leather coat and choker.

But when we learn that Lisa has slept with Joe, it is clear that we are in for an evening of mixed doubles depicting the sexual confusion of modern

youth. Craig's characters are muddled, suffering and confused, but you never feel they represent anything beyond themselves.

When Ben says: "I'm a writer... I need my misery," he simply sounds self-indulgent. Even Joe's addiction to drugs springs out of nowhere and seems a desperate attempt to make the character interesting.

I also wonder if Craig's contemporaries really talk like the people in his play. "You're etched into me so deeply you've become my condition," says Lisa to Ben, which seems good grounds for parting.

Someone else remarks: "We're just two separate entities sharing a space." Oddly enough the play is never boring. But that is largely because it moves

quickly and because it offers the vague, if unfulfilled, promise of erotic excitement. It also helps that the actors are young and personable.

Much the best is Hermione Gulliford who, stepping in at short notice for Anna Winslet, overcomes Lisa's often impossible lines to present us with a woman who has a modicum of sense. Jack Herbert also does all he can as the putative play-

wright, although I've never met a real dramatist so entirely self-obsessed.

Kris Marshall and Victoria Woodward adequately depict the other couple, who suggest *la dolce vita* has unexpectedly moved from Rome to York. But in the end this play simply makes you aware of how brilliant *Closer* is.

This review appeared in some editions yesterday.

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# Leeson, man who broke the bank, battles cancer

Luke Harding

THE fate of Nick Leeson last night rested in the hands of Singapore's ailing 62-year-old President Ong Teng Chong, after it emerged the jailed rogue trader who brought down Barings bank is seriously ill with cancer.

Lawyers in Singapore yesterday lodged a plea for his urgent release on medical and compassionate grounds.

Leeson, aged 31, was diagnosed two days ago as having cancer of the colon. The disease has spread to his lymph nodes. Doctors yesterday gave him a 50 per cent chance of survival.

His ex-wife Lisa, aged 30, who was due to remarry next week, postponed her wedding. She said last night she was devastated by the news: "We are in deep shock and our thoughts at this time are with Nick and his family."

Leeson has been moved to the hospital wing of Changi Prison in Singapore. The trader, who lost £280 million gambling on Far East financial markets and broke Britain's oldest merchant bank, was due to be released from jail next July, when he would have served less than four years of his six-year sentence.

Under Singaporean law, his 1995 jail term can only be commuted by a direct pardon from President Chong, who himself suffers from cancer of the lymphatic system. Lawyers familiar with Singapore's appeal process last night hinted that an early release was possible. "In the circumstances as far as Nick Leeson is concerned, I think yes," one source said. I think Leeson's lawyer in Singapore, John Koh, said he could not say how long it would take before Leeson would be allowed home — or whether

legal efforts to release him would be successful. There are moves to transfer him to a civilian hospital.

Speaking yesterday from the family home in Watford, Leeson's father William, a plasterer, denied that conditions in Changi had contributed to his son's condition. "The jail is A1. It is as good as gold," he said.

Leeson's British solicitor, Stephen Pollard, said the fam-

## Colonic cancer

Some 40,000 people in the UK develop bowel cancer each year. It is the second most deadly cancer after lung cancer, killing 19,000 people every year.

In 50 per cent of cases it spreads to the lymph nodes.

The disease normally affects older people. Sufferers are often overweight, or eat a diet containing high levels of red meat, fat and alcohol and low levels of fibre.

About 10 per cent of patients may have a genetic abnormality that makes them susceptible to the cancer. Doctors say Nick Leeson almost certainly falls into this category.

He was still coming to terms with the news. He added: "It is anticipated that he may know more about the prognosis next week."

Experts last night suggested Leeson's cancer — highly unusual at the age of 31 — was almost certainly caused by a genetic abnormality. Bowel cancer is normally found in older patients. It is usually caused by an unhealthy diet.

Leeson will probably undergo emergency surgery



Nick Leeson, the rogue trader who brought down Barings, has been moved to Changi Prison's hospital wing



Leeson's ex-wife Lisa at Downing Street after his arrest. She has postponed plans to remarry

PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID SILLITOE

to remove up to a foot of his colon and the infected lymph glands, followed by a course of chemotherapy and anti-toxic drugs. "What matters now is the quality of the surgeon who is to operate on him," said Professor Gordon McVie, director-general of the Cancer Research Campaign.

If the cancer spread to his liver his chances of survival were "zero", he added.

Michael Henry, a surgeon at the Royal Marsden Hospital in London, described the prisoner's cancer as "still curable".

Leeson's then wife Lisa vowed to stand by her husband at the time of his arrest in February 1995. But their marriage collapsed after the publication of Leeson's auto-

biography, *Rogue Trader*, which laid bare his adultery and her miscarriage. The book has been made into a 28 million film, due out next year, starring Ewan McGregor and Anna Friel.

In her statement Lisa, who has reverted to her maiden name, Sims, said she had not seen her ex-husband for more than a year. The couple divorced in late 1996. She is to marry another bank trader, Keith Horlock, aged 34.

Leeson had been a highly successful trader in Barings' Singapore operation, earning a staggering £26 million for the bank and £2 million commission for himself in a single year. But his gambles on Japanese stock markets began to go massively awry. He fooled Barings' auditors by hiding the scale of his losses in a false account.

When he realised he was about to be found out, he vanished, first to Malaysia and then, with Lisa, to Brunel. A worldwide hunt began after executives at Barings realised the scale of the disaster.

After five days Leeson attempted to return to Britain but was arrested when his plane stopped at Frankfurt. He fought a long extradition

case in Germany, in an attempt to stand trial in Britain, before he was sent to Singapore, where he pleaded guilty to two charges of fraud.

British officials in Singapore last night said they had no idea how long it would take for Leeson to be released. "It's difficult to say. I expect in the circumstances he will be released quite quickly," a spokesman from the British High Commission said. Leeson is being visited daily by consular officials, including the Commission's vice-consul, Sue Cronin.

There is no reciprocal prison agreement between Britain and Singapore which would allow Leeson to serve out the rest of his sentence in a British jail.

# Censure for council over 'insult' to dead

David Brindley, Social Services Correspondent

A COUNCIL is today severely censured for refusing to pay for a pauper's funeral for an 85-year-old woman on the arresting grounds that her body was a "waste product" of the care home where she had lived.

The local government ombudsman rules that the council's argument that the body was controlled waste as defined by the Environmental Protection Act, and was therefore a business cost, was "entirely inappropriate and specious".

Patricia Thomas, the ombudsman for the north of England, said: "I consider it far-fetched, not to say insulting, to regard deceased residents as a waste by-product of a business, similar to an unpleasant chemical discharge produced by a manufacturing process."

The council, Castle Morpeth in Northumberland, is defending its stance. Peter Wilson, its chief executive, said the ombudsman had seized on "emotive words" that detracted from important issues of principle that were at stake.

The woman, who has not been named, had lived in long-stay hospitals and care homes for 57 years after being admitted to a psychiatric unit at age 28. She died in January at the Howard Castle residential and nursing home in Morpeth.

Last summer, the council warned care homes it would not in future take responsibility for deceased home residents under the Public Health Act 1984 — limiting its liability to funerals for people, without means or relatives, who died in the street or in their own homes.

"A residential home is the last home for many people, and, just as you would provide for their needs when they arrive, so you should provide for their needs when they depart," the council said in a letter to the homes.

The woman, who had no known relatives, had been at Howard Castle since 1982 with her £300-a-week fees met by the state.

Her sole income was a social security personal allowance, later £14.10 a week, and at her death she had £450 savings.

When the home asked Castle Morpeth if it would help with funeral costs, the council refused and said the £450 ought to be enough to pay for a modest service.

The home made its own arrangements, persuading a doctor to waive his fee for certifying death and a clergyman to officiate on an expenses-only basis. Staff donated money for flowers and a death notice in the local newspaper. Other costs amounted to £286.50.

After the home complained to the ombudsman, the council said private homes such as Howard Castle were profit-maximising bodies with the means and know-how to provide a funeral.

"Without wishing to appear insensitive, one could argue that from a commercial viewpoint residents of a home are its income-producing raw material. Ergo, from a purely commercial view, deceased residents may then be regarded as being the waste produced by their business."

The ombudsman today dismisses such arguments, recommending that the council comply fully with the 1984 act, reimburse the home its costs above £450, and pay the home manager £250 for her time and trouble.

Sonia Harwood, the home's matron-manager, said she hoped the decision would set a precedent.

Organisations representing care homes said the case was extremely worrying.

Frank Ursell, chief executive officer of the Registered Nursing Homes Association, said: "In my view, there is no other word for it."

Mr Wilson said Castle Morpeth councillors would meet next month to consider their response to the ombudsman's ruling.

# Pedal power to keep the lights on

Lisa Buckingham City Editor

LONDON Electricity is planning to provide staff with mountain bikes and reactivate old telephone land lines to keep the lights on at the millennium.

Although the capital's power supplier has already embarked on a multi-million pound programme to ensure that its own operations are not brought to a standstill by millennium chaos, executives are less confident about others.

"We have to be able to get staff to sub-stations in central London even if there is a total traffic logjam," said a spokesman for London Electricity. "And once we've got them there we have got to be able to communicate."

The company is understood to be planning to buy around 150 mountain bikes for staff, who would normally travel by van.

A succession of millennium-related failures could cause traffic gridlock. A

range of equipment is expected to be unable to function after midnight on December 31, 1999 because the controlling computer chips will not recognise 2000. Their timing devices have only two digits, to save memory, and may assume it is 1900 rather than 2000.

Draconian strategies are being considered by other parts of industry. A European airline is understood to have plans to ground its fleet to avoid a potentially fatal on-board computer failure at midnight.

A hospital trust in the South East is believed to have contingency plans to move long stay patients into local hotels to clear capacity for an expected surge in accident victims.

"We are probably only talking about a few dozen people, so it will only be tens of mountain bikes not hundreds," the spokesman added. The power supply group said the old landline telephone system connecting its substations could be reactivated.

No cover for bug, page 16

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## Official view

'Mr Campbell is frequently credited with the ability to manipulate or lean on the press, but the journalists from whom we took evidence were sceptical of anyone's ability to do this ... we were given no clear evidence that Mr Campbell provides some journalists with special treatment'

## Minority view

'There has been some concern that the Government's interest in presenting its policy to best advantage sometimes means that it is not announced as it should be, first to Parliament. We note that the Speaker has expressed her concern at the practice of briefing in advance of a ministerial statement to the House ... Mr Campbell in his evidence said in effect that this was not something he could do much about ... we found his evidence on this point unconvincing'

## Acrimony among MPs over report on role of PM's press spokesman



'I do not think there is any wish to politicise the government machine, or to behave improperly'

Sir Richard Wilson, Cabinet Secretary



'If the Prime Minister is the subject of a political attack I am in a position to rebut it'

Alastair Campbell, Press Secretary



'Now we have selective briefing all over the place ... theirs is favouritism which is blatant'

Sir Bernard Ingham, ex-press secretary

# Tories claim Campbell 'whitewash'

Lucy Ward  
Political Correspondent

**L**ABOUR MPs were yesterday accused by Conservatives of being "glove puppet" of Alastair Campbell, the Prime Minister's spokesman, as an inquiry into claims of politicisation of the Government's press machine ended in bitter division.

The official report of an investigation by the influential Commons public administration committee was condemned as a "whitewash" by

Tory and Liberal Democrat members, who published an alternative report attacking a "hurring" of the divide between government advisers and civil servants.

The split, which came after the majority Labour members pushed through a series of amendments toning down the draft document, is the first over any select committee report since Labour took power.

The two reports are almost diametrically opposed, one finding "no clear evidence" that Mr Campbell gives preferential treatment to selected journalists, while the other

calls for a further Commons inquiry into claims of "a sharp growth in pre-briefing" before announcements are made to Parliament.

Tory MP Andrew Tyrie, who moved the draft report, yesterday claimed that Mr Campbell, who gave evidence to the committee, "is not a politically neutral press officer but a hatchet man for the Labour Party". The Tories and Lib Dems called for his salary to be paid from Labour funds.

In a heated press conference, a Tory committee member, David Ruffley, clashed with his Labour counterpart,

Fraser Kemp, claiming Labour members had been "nobbled" by party whips. He said: "The behaviour of Labour members is a disgrace ... They are nothing more than Alastair Campbell's glove puppets. I know that this stitch-up, this cover-up, will be seen through."

The Tories and the one Lib Dem committee member, Mike Hancock, claimed the report had been rushed out, despite their calls for a delay to allow the committee to take evidence from Jack Cunningham, the newly-appointed cabinet "enforcer".

Opposition MPs also lost a

battle to include a recommendation in the report that tapes of Mr Campbell's twice-daily briefings with lobby journalists be kept for a year, rather than a few weeks as at present.

The committee chairman, Labour's Rhodri Morgan, who did not use his casting vote during votes on amendments, said the evidence given to the committee had not supported claims of abuse of taxpayers' money to gain undue preference for party purposes. "That isn't to say some people don't continue to grumble and mumble," he said.

The minority report recom-

mends that political appointees to the Civil Service "who are asked to undertake significant amounts of party political activity should be paid from party funds and not by the taxpayer" - a proposal aimed squarely at Mr Campbell, who is employed under a unique contract enabling him to make political statements while remaining a civil servant.

The official report, meanwhile, proposes the introduction of a code on contacts with the press which would oblige ministers and special advisers to "work closely with the Prime Minister's

official spokesman in particular". That clause, which would effectively strengthen Mr Campbell's arm still further, infuriated opposition committee members.

Mr Ruffley said: "We want this man reined in. We want controls put on this political activity".

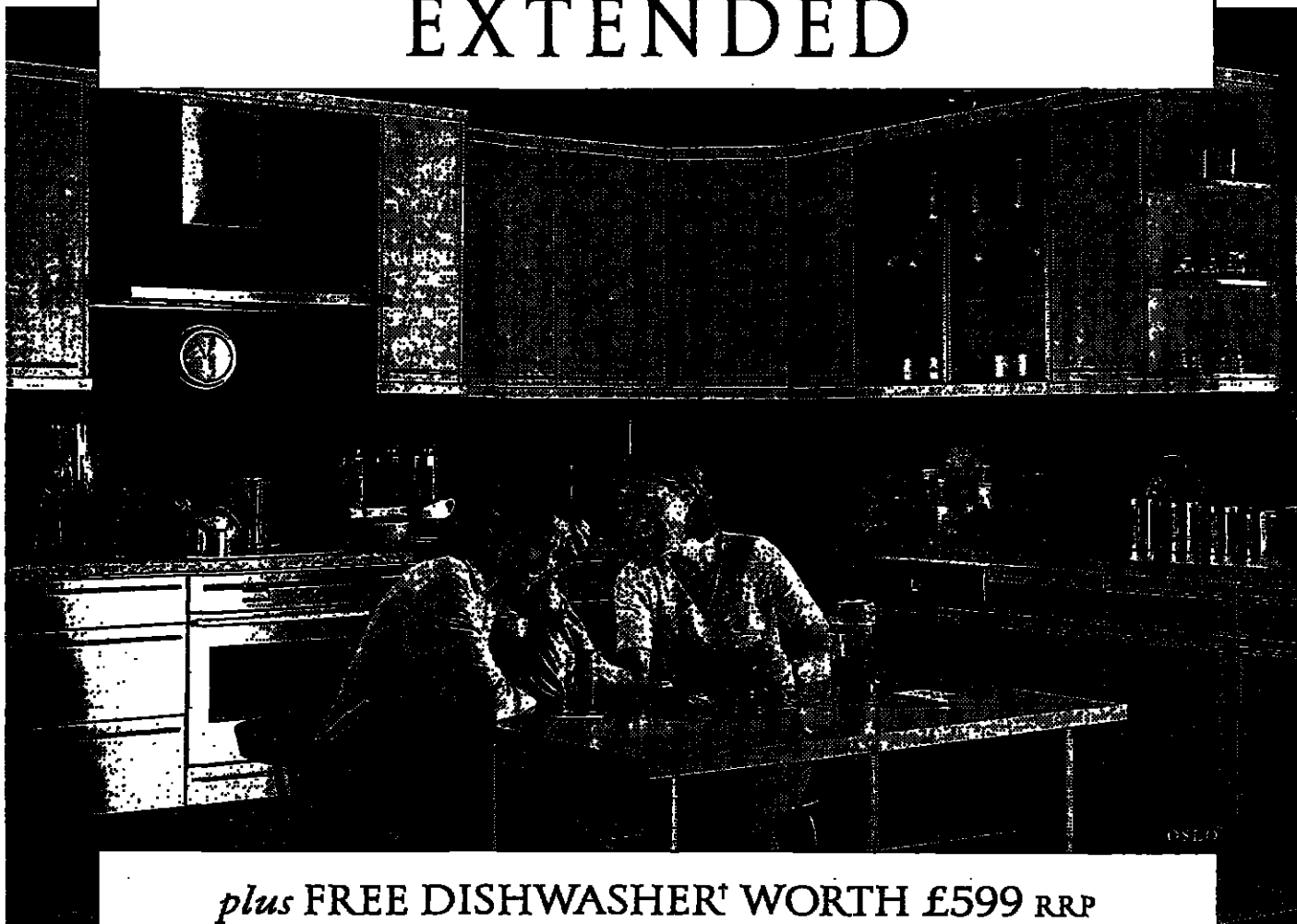
The majority report also tones down criticism of the Strategic Communications Unit, a Downing Street team set up in January to co-ordinate policy presentation across the Government. Mr Tyrie's report suggested the unit "risks giving an advantage to the party in power",

and urges its funding be amended to reflect this.

In the majority report, the MPs simply ask the Government to describe the unit's work and "how it distinguishes between legitimate activity on behalf of the Government and activity which could unduly advantage the party of Government".

Opposition MPs believe the final document also fails adequately to address claims that a series of senior departures from the 1,000-strong Government Information Service have been prompted by government pressure to impose "friendly" replacements.

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## Volunteer to sue 'Angel of Mostar'

Nick Hopkins

**S**HE has been jailed, endured a hunger strike, and survived numerous trips into war zones to help the sick and dying.

But Sally Becker, the aid worker known as the Angel of Mostar, now appears to have another battle on her hands.

A volunteer who joined her on a trip to deliver medicine and clothes to Kosovo on the Albanian border announced yesterday that she intends to sue Ms Becker for negligence.

Mary Banks, one of the 26 volunteers who left England on June 21 for Operation Angel, claimed Ms Becker did not plan the expedition properly and needlessly put her life at risk. She said several members of the team were traumatised by Ms Becker's "stupidity".

The journey involved crossing mountains in an ex-army Leyland Tiger coach packed with supplies. Mrs Banks, from Sheffield, was one of the assigned drivers.

Mrs Banks claims Ms Becker deliberately ignored warnings that the mountain roads were unsuitable for the 30t coach. "We were con-

vinced we would not survive the crossing," she said.

My hands were red raw after driving a coach on a mountain ledge 10,000ft up for 15 hours. The girls in the back were screaming to be shot by snipers because they thought that would be better than going over the edge in a bus. The whole experience was horrendous."

She added: "We didn't mind being injured if we were in a war zone but to die before we got there as so nearly happened was just stupidity. When we complained we were made to feel like wimps."

Mrs Banks, who is in her mid-50s, has contacted a solicitor, who says she has good grounds to seek compensation. She is hoping that at least four other volunteers will support her claim, including Jenny Wheatham, aged 47, from Shoreham-by-Sea, West Sussex.

Mrs Wheatham said she was so traumatised by the ordeal that she asked to go home. "It was the most harrowing experience of my life. Sally made me pay my own air fare home and made me feel like a coward," she claimed.

Ms Becker's mercy missions have been criticised by the United Nations High Com-

mission for Refugees. "Her intention of saving women and children and victims of conflict is a noble one, but sometimes she creates more problems than she solves," a UNHCR spokesman said.

However, as word of the proposed legal action spread, other volunteers sprung to Ms Becker's defence.

"Mary is talking nonsense," said Maud Dorn. "She didn't stop moaning from the minute she joined the party. Of course the mission was dangerous, what did she expect?"

Christine Gregory, of North Wales, added: "Nobody got hurt, nobody came off the edge of the mountain and we did succeed in delivering our supplies."

Mike Mendoza, a spokesman for Ms Becker, said 20 volunteers had given Ms Becker whole-hearted support and had asked to join the next mission. "The ladies on the coach were offered space in other vehicles and Sally even offered to drive the coach herself. The coach driver insisted only she should drive it and the women on board refused to leave."

He said the convoy succeeded in delivering vital supplies to hospitals and refugees.



Sally Becker, survivor of many trips to war zones, faces court battle PHOTOGRAPH: TIM OCKENBEN



**The working family tax credit venture**  
...offers huge bonuses for dishonesty  
for both employers and workers.

Frank Field's speech to the Social Market Foundation

**Comment, this section page 12**

مكتبة الأمل

# Genetic crops can aid superweeds, claim scientists

Tim Radford  
Science Editor

SCIENTISTS last night confirmed the green campaigner's worst nightmare: genetically-engineered crops can lead to superweeds which shrug off weedkillers.

In a bid to tackle the problem of dealing with weeds using weedkillers which can also destroy crops, genetic engineering has been used to develop crops which can withstand one specific herbicide. In theory, with one spraying, farmers should have weed-free harvests.

But Dr Allison Snow of Ohio state university yesterday told the Ecological Society of America meeting in Baltimore that she and Danish scientists had discovered new evidence that the genes can also spread from crops to weeds — making them just as strong as their ordinary relatives.

The scientists had crossed a herbicide-resistant oilseed rape with a wild relative in laboratory conditions. The theory was that although the resulting weed would inherit the artificial gene, the weed would also produce fewer flowers, or seeds as a result.

But the only difference between the genetically-altered

weed and ordinary weeds lay in the looks, and even that did not last. "By the third generation, the weeds that carried the gene for herbicide resistance looked exactly like normal weeds. The only way to tell them apart was to expose them to herbicide or test their DNA," she said.

The report is a gift for campaigners who want to halt the spread of genetically-altered crops in Europe. A number of field trials in Britain have been disrupted. A genetically-engineered maize produced by Novartis — altered to provide its own pesticide — has been shown to kill "useful" insects as well as crop pests.

The Ohio discovery is not the first to show that crop genes altered by humans can escape into the wild. Cultivated crop plants cannot compete with weeds: they need human help to eliminate the competition, or they perish. The thinking behind genetically-engineered resistance to one particular herbicide has been that the grower could eliminate all the weed competition in a field by spraying.

The calculation was that any accidental hybrids would inherit the vulnerability of the crop parent along with the artificial benefit. It proved wrong. The outcome was the worst of all worlds. The laboratory hybrids had

all the aggressiveness of the weed parents with weedkiller-resistance built in.

Many crops — potatoes, for instance — do not have close relatives co-existing as weeds. Oilseed rape is a member of the brassica family, and wild weed brassicas often grow nearby, which would make it easy for genes to transfer with the pollen. Experiments last year showed that oilseed rape pollen can reach weeds more than a mile away.

"If farmers spray their crops with the same herbicide every year, the only weeds to survive will be the ones with the transgenes — and then the transgenes will spread even faster," Dr Snow said. "That's why the area of crop transgenes is so controversial."

Sue Mayer of Genewatch said: "We've been warning people about these risks and they have been ignored by the regulators. They have continued to license and encourage the development of these crops."

Zeneca, which is pioneering genetically-engineered crops in Britain, said such discoveries were no reason to stop the research. "But we do believe it is imperative that farmers continue to have a wide variety of chemical and mechanical methods available to control weeds."



Adam J Barker and Parmin Ras perform Alam Halus in woods behind the Hawth theatre in Crawley, West Sussex, as part of the International Festival of Arts. Alam Halus follows the hero, Bima, through life and death using fire and water in locations in the woods. PHOTOGRAPH: ROGER BAMBER

## Radio 4 revamp lures more listeners

Cold comfort for BBC as other stations lose audiences

Janine Gibson  
Media Correspondent

RADIO 4 controller James Boyle was yesterday vindicated in his revamp of the station, which has attracted more listeners, but the news for the rest of BBC radio was far from good.

Radio Joint Audience Research (Rajar) quarterly figures showed a drop in weekly audience for all BBC stations except Radio 4 — which added 100,000 listeners between April and June, taking its total to 8.3 million.

Mr Boyle's cautiously received schedule, which began in April, has been less than a total success, however. Although more people are sampling the station, they are on average listening for half an hour less each week.

Yesterday Mr Boyle declared the revamp to have had a good start. "I said it was to gain long-term benefits, not

### Making waves

% change in weekly audience, 1st quarter to 2nd quarter 1998



a short-term quick fix," he said.

Radio 1, while still the most listened to network with an audience of 9.4 million a week, continued its decline, losing nearly 365,000, about 4 per cent. The audience for the all-important breakfast show, in which Zoe Ball and Kevin Greening take on Virgin Radio's Chris Evans and posse, dropped by 264,000 to 4.5 million. Evans increased his figure by a modest 62,000 to 2.5 million.

BBC Radio's biggest success story of recent years, Radio 5 Live, had a troublesome quarter, despite its World Cup coverage. The audience fell by more than 300,000 to 5.2 million, down 6

per cent, but a spokeswoman denied that the figures meant an overall decline. "Radio 5 is seasonal. It always drops in this quarter because there's no Premier League football," she said, adding that its reach had increased by 300,000 compared with last year.

Radio 2 suffered a decline of nearly 2 per cent, to 8.8 million listeners. Troubled Radio 3, which has just lost controller Nicholas Kenyon, lost 100,000 listeners, dropping below 2.6 million and becoming the least listened to national radio station.

The BBC's figures look poor beside those of some key national rivals in a quarter in which commercial radio took 8.1 per cent of all listening.

Talk Radio recorded a huge climb of nearly 14 per cent, with 300,000 extra listeners taking its total to 2.6 million. It attributed the gain to its new breakfast show, presented by Kirsty Young, and Scott Chisholm's morning show. Managing director Paul Robinson also credited the station's World Cup programming, which attracted more young male listeners.

Radio 3's great rival, Classic FM, achieved its highest listening figures, although the increase was tiny. After crossing the 5 million audience threshold earlier this year, it sustained it with a 21,000 rise last quarter.

Des Lynam smooth talks his way into Radio 2 drive-time

AS SILVER of tongue as the is of hair, Des Lynam (right) has been the thinking woman's crumpet for some time, but he will confirm his place in middle England's hearts in October by taking on the prestigious drive-time slot on Radio 2, writes Janine Gibson.



DJ Des will host a two-hour music and chat show on Friday evenings between 5 and 7 pm, taking over the slot from a Radio 2 veteran, John Dunn, who is retiring.

The BBC's star sports commentator, who began in local radio and even presented Radio 4's Today, said yesterday: "It's really a chance to wind down with Des for the weekend."

Des Lynam, 42, of Litcham, Norfolk, wept as she told the inquest how she left her home last September to drive to a house in Spole where she had a regular job. She parked the car at the back of the house, leaving Martha awake and strapped in her car seat, and wound down the driver's window to allow air into the vehicle.

She told the court she started work at around 8.30am and looked out of the window at 20 minute intervals to check on Martha. At about 9am she noticed that Martha had fallen asleep. Mrs Daniels was too distressed to tell the hearing what she found on returning to the car after finishing her work at about 11.30am.

## Parents warned over children left in cars

Geoffrey Gibbs

PARENTS were warned yesterday about the dangers of leaving their children unattended in cars after an inquest heard how a 23-month-old girl died after being left strapped in her seat for three hours on a day when the temperature topped 70F.

Martha Daniels was found lifeless and frothing at the mouth by her mother who had been doing some cleaning work in a house nearby.

Sarah Daniels, aged 24, of Litcham, Norfolk, wept as she told the inquest how she left her home last September to drive to a house in Spole where she had a regular job.

She parked the car at the back of the house, leaving Martha awake and strapped in her car seat, and wound down the driver's window to allow air into the vehicle.

She told the court she started work at around 8.30am and looked out of the window at 20 minute intervals to check on Martha. At about 9am she noticed that Martha had fallen asleep.

Mrs Daniels was too distressed to tell the hearing what she found on returning to the car after finishing her work at about 11.30am.

But in a statement given to police shortly after Martha's death, she said she could see white froth coming from her daughter's mouth.

In her statement, read to the court by coroner, Oliver Frankl, Mrs Daniels told police: "I opened the car door and unstrapped her from the car seat but she seemed lifeless. I called her name constantly but there was no response."

**'Just don't leave your child in the car, and you'll avoid terrible consequences'**

Dr Sams told the court how studies showed that the human body temperature rose by one degree per hour if it was not allowed to lose heat in the normal way and that child seats tended to have the effect of making youngsters hot.

The coroner recorded an open verdict. After the hearing police warned about the dangers of leaving children inside cars without adequate ventilation.

A spokesman for the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, added: "There is always the potential for accidents. Children can pretend to be drivers, take the hand-brake off, or parents might accidentally leave keys in the ignition. The consequences can be appalling. There have also been many cases of cars being stolen with babies in the back seat. The message is just don't leave your child in the car, and you will avoid terrible consequences."

## Scientists link birth defects to landfill sites

Sarah Bosley  
Health Correspondent

WOMEN who live within three kilometres of hazardous waste landfill sites have a 33 per cent higher risk of having babies with birth defects than those living further away, says a study in the Lancet.

The researchers, led by Helen Dolk from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, considered this increased risk to be "small but significant".

The health problems which occurred most often in the babies born to families close to waste dumps were neural tube defects, such as spina bifida, holes in the heart and artery malformations. But the authors say they cannot establish whether toxic waste is the cause of the defects, and call for more surveillance of the impact of dumps.

Dr Dolk and colleagues looked at data on birth malformations close to 21 toxic waste sites in five countries. Their study included 1,088 women whose babies had birth defects and 2,386 whose babies did not. All the women lived within seven kilometres of a landfill site.

They found that those who lived closest — within three kilometres — were 33 per cent more likely to have babies with defects.

But both the authors, and in a separate commentary on the research, Goran Pershagen from the Institute of Environmental Medicine in Stockholm, Sweden, pointed out that there is no conclusive

evidence that the defects are caused by toxic chemicals from the sites.

Dr Dolk and colleagues say they do not think there is a socioeconomic explanation, but there are other possible confounding factors. There could be other sources of toxicity nearby, or the mothers could have jobs at industrial sites with high health risks. It is also not possible to say what chemicals could be responsible, because landfill sites contain a mixture and record keeping was not always complete.

But it is also possible, they say, that the numbers of babies with defects could be underestimated, because 25 per cent of women move house during pregnancy.

Professor Pershagen says the results are difficult to interpret. There is little information about chemicals being emitted from sites. "It is not even clear that the study populations are excessively exposed to toxic agents originating from the landfills."

But more studies were needed. "Most studies on risk factors in the environment show only modest relative risks, but these effects may still be important from a public health perspective."

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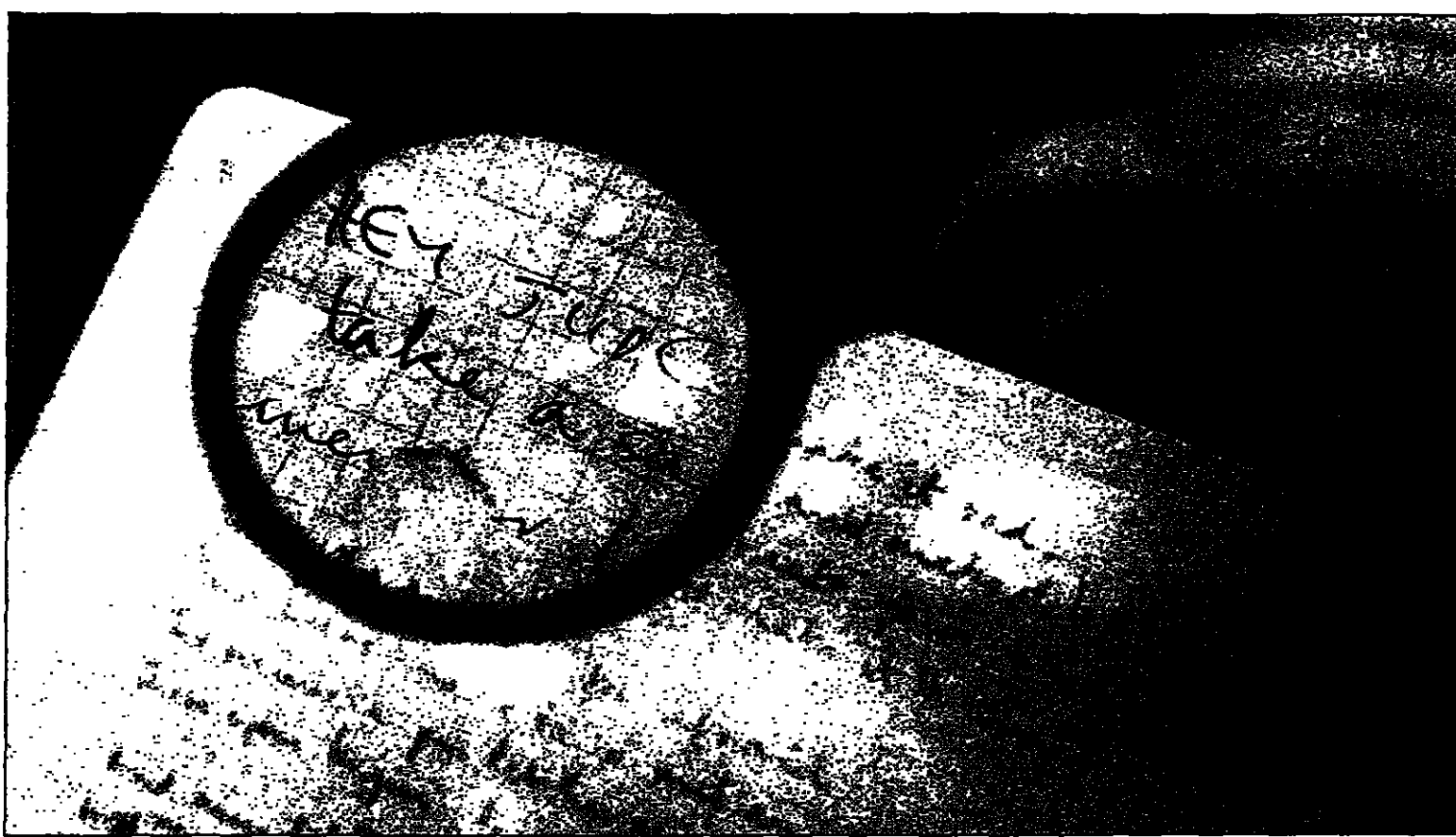
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The draft lyrics for Hey Jude, in a notebook described as 'one of the most important pieces of memorabilia to come on the market' PHOTOGRAPH: PAUL HACKETT

## Beatles lyrics set to fetch £90,000

A NOTEBOOK containing draft Beatles lyrics for Hey Jude and Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band was unveiled yesterday as the centrepiece of a sale of rock'n'roll memorabilia.

The booklet, compiled by the group's road manager, Mal Evans, also contains doodles by John Lennon and is expected to fetch at least £90,000 when it is auctioned by Sotheby's at The Hard Rock Cafe in central London on September 15.

Stephen Maycock, Sotheby's rock and pop specialist, said: "I feel it is one of the most important pieces

of memorabilia that has come on the market."

Lyrics were scribbled by Paul McCartney in the spiral-bound jotter, which was used over 18 months in 1967/68. That period saw some of the band's most ground-breaking material issued on vinyl, with the release of Sergeant Pepper and The Beatles — more commonly known as the White Album.

Many of the lines were jotted down by Evans, including words to songs like Good Morning, Good Morning, Magical Mystery Tour, A Day in the Life and Altogether Now, which features

annotations from McCartney. A draft of Being for the Benefit of Mr Kite includes a line added by Lennon.

Two poems by Mr Evans are also in the notebook. A faithful member of the Beatles entourage, he was killed by police in Los Angeles in 1976 after brandishing an imitation gun.

Mr Maycock said he expected the notebook to fetch between £90,000 and £120,000. It had come from an "anonymous vendor", who had had it for 30 years. "They thought it was time for someone else to enjoy and own it."

Asked how its authenticity could be gauged, he said: "Apart from the source who I know to be 100 per cent genuine, I have seen various handwritings over the years. You can compare manuscripts."

When Evans's widow, Lily, tried to sell a set of original lyrics, collected by Evans, for With a Little Help from My Friends, McCartney went to the High Court to prevent the scribbled words from being included in an auction.

McCartney's spokesman said yesterday that he knew nothing of the latest lyric sale nor of the musician's likely reaction to it.

Overall figures show hooliganism at all-time low

## Arrests for soccer violence treble

Alan Travis  
Home Affairs Editor

THERE has been a marked resurgence in hardcore football-related violence at league matches in England and Wales, according to official figures published yesterday.

Arrests for serious violent crime, including affray, assault, violent disorder and missile-throwing more than trebled from 72 in 1996/97 to 258 during the last football season. The number arrested for racist or indecent chanting rose from 11 to 31.

But when more minor crimes such as drink-related offences are taken into account, the police arrest figures show that football hooliganism is at an all-time low at English and Welsh league games.

The publication of the annual football arrest figures by the National Crime Intelligence Service (NCIS) came the day before police get new powers of arrest to prevent known hooligans, including those who caused trouble during the World Cup, from travelling abroad to follow club or national teams. They have to report to a police station when a designated match takes place.

From today, people subject to these football restriction orders can be arrested if they are seen at a train station or airport on their way to a game. Before they could be arrested only if they had already broken such orders.

The new police powers

### Red cards

Travelling fans ejected from the ground at away matches during 1997/98:

Tottenham Hotspur	59
Leicester City	55
Manchester United	51
Barnsley	46
Liverpool	46
Chelsea	36
Leeds United	35
Everton	29
Coventry City	27
West Ham United	25
Aston Villa	23
Sheffield Wednesday	22
Crystal Palace	17
Arsenal	16
Bolton Wanderers	16
Newcastle United	14
Blackburn Rovers	13
Wimbledon	5
Derby County	5
Southampton	2

come as the number of arrests fell for the fifth year running from 3,577 to 3,307.

In the Premiership, closed circuit television and all-seater stadiums have helped shift hooliganism away from the football ground. There were fewer arrests — 615 — inside Premiership football grounds than the number outside, which reached 823.

Division One games saw 1,173 arrests as against 1,438 for the Premiership, but Divisions Two and Three together had only 696 people arrested.

Detective Superintendent Bryan Drew, NCIS's head of strategic and specialist intelligence, said the figures showed that football hooliganism at home had continued to decline.

"I am concerned that the arrests for violent offences are on the up. The numbers remain comparatively small — especially when one considers the large increase in people going to watch football — but it is this hardcore that causes a disproportionate amount of misery."

He said there were some groups of hooligans who went to extraordinary lengths to avoid detection of their travel, accommodation and communication arrangements who remained a stain on England's reputation abroad.

Steve Double, of the Football Association, welcomed the wider use of restriction orders and said the new powers would stop known thugs from travelling to Sweden next month for England's qualifying game for the 2000 European Championships.

"There is no room for complacency. The fall in arrests for general misbehaviour and the fact that most happen outside grounds show that football grounds are safer than ever before."

The Football Supporters Association said that the increase in violent crime reflected the trend in society as a whole and the arrest figures for Everton and Liverpool for the whole season did not even match one Saturday night in Britain's town centres.

Police watch spoiled plans of England troublemakers

THE final police tally of arrests and expulsions of English football fans during the World Cup shows that a targeted intelligence operation was probably fairly successful in identifying and dealing with the key troublemakers, writes Alan Travis.

A French police policy of avoiding mass arrests meant the final number of arrests of English football fans at 276 was one third of the tally during Euro 96 and lower than the total during Italia 90.

Some 388 English fans were refused entry to France during the World Cup on the basis of intelligence information supplied by the British police and the National Criminal Intelligence Service.

Twenty English supporters were jailed as a result of offences during France 98; 14 were expelled from the country and a further 11 are awaiting trial or are on bail, according to the latest figures from the Home Office.

These figures compare with 1,107 arrests for football related offences during the Euro 96 tournament staged in England. Some 816 England fans were arrested during Euro 96 along with 66 Scottish supporters.

Perhaps the most direct comparison is between the 276 England fans arrested during the World Cup and the 17 French fans arrested during Euro 96. During that, 17 Dutch fans were arrested, along with 13 Germans, 10 Croats and six Irish.

MPs condemn Short for Sudan aid stance

David Hencke  
Westminster Correspondent

CLARE Short is today condemned by MPs for saying that disaster aid to relieve the plight of millions of people starving to death in Sudan was unnecessary.

The Commons Select Committee on International Development criticises her for making premature statements "in such bald terms, that there was no lack of money or resources for

Sudan" to MPs and the public.

Ms Short, the International Development Secretary, had attacked the appeal launched by the Disasters Emergency Committee, which co-ordinates the relief work of 15 British agencies, for the war-torn country as "unnecessary".

She had also told MPs: "The problem is not providing money; it is applying political pressure so that food can get through to the people."

The report also criticises Ms Short for claiming that

the emergency aid appeal also reduced pressure on the Sudanese rebels to agree a ceasefire. The MPs say they are "baffled" by her statement.

The MPs sympathise with Ms Short's frustration at the political indifference towards Sudan which is racked by civil war and has little chance of longer term development.

They congratulate her on her efforts with the United Nations security council to try to establish "corridors of tranquillity" so the aid can get through.

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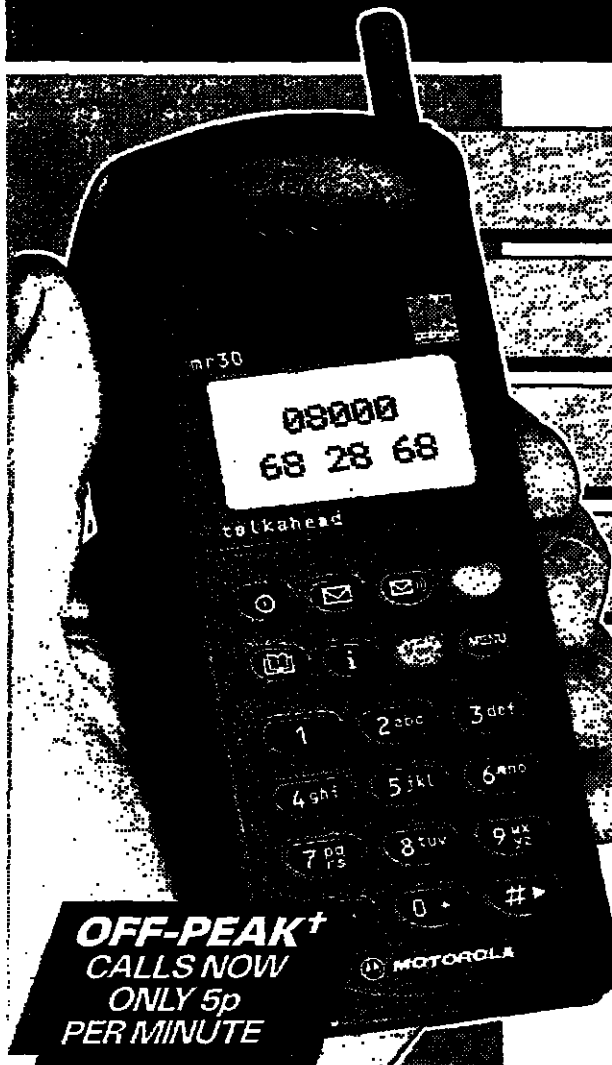
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John Ezard on a £40m bonanza for those following in the footsteps of (from left) Coleridge, Conrad, Joyce and Lawrence



## Winnie the Pooh buyout promises struggling writers a taste of honey

A LITTLE-known writers' charity which has for more than 200 years struggled to give small sums to destitute authors is excitedly looking forward to a £40 million bonanza.

Within six months the windfall is likely to flow into the Royal Literary Fund from the Disney organisation, which is negotiating to buy out the last 27 years of copyright for A A Milne's Pooh stories.

The fund is one of the Milne estate's five beneficiaries. The others are Westminster School, Milne's descendants, the descendants of his illustrator, E H Shepherd, and the Garrick Club in London — where some of the 1,300 members are campaigning for a payout of £39,000 each.

For writers starving in garrets over word processors, the prospect is slightly less rosy. The best they can expect is pounds from heaven, rather

than the pennies they used to get. "It isn't going to be champagne and caviar all round — absolutely not," the fund's senior treasurer, literary agent Peter Jansen-Smith said yesterday.

"But it does mean that there will be more people we can help. There are a lot of authors now who are out of fashion. We will be able to make their later years a little more comfortable."

Another trustee, Kate Poole, who represents the Society of Authors said, "Anything that helps is wonderful. This is a very tough time for authors who used to aspire, not unreasonably, to make a living out of writing. Their market is vanishing."

The fund, which has the Queen as patron, was founded in 1792 after a classical translator, Floyer Sydenham, died in a debtor's prison. One of its earlier gifts was £20 to the poet Samuel Coleridge.

Among later writers to benefit were Thomas Love Peacock, Thomas Hood, Richard Jeffries, Joseph Conrad and D H Lawrence. In 1915 James Joyce, author of *Ulysses*, was awarded a pension. Present-day grants are anonymous.

Five years ago, the fund's income from Milne royalties began to rise as filming increased. Last year this reached £2 million, dwarfing the second highest benefactor, the Somerset Maugham estate, which yielded £78,000.

The fund, with £9 million in the bank, was able to give nearly £1.2 million in grants and pensions. It helped 152 writers, 41 of them pensioners. The average grant was £5,000, the average pension £5,300.

Mr Jansen-Smith said he was optimistic that the Disney deal would go through. "This is a good thing for us because in 10 years the stories might lose popularity

and the present yearly income might have dropped. "It's a bit exaggerated to call it mega-bucks for authors. We may now be able to help some writers to retain their libraries, rather than to have to sell them to raise money."

The Garrick Club's managing committee has set up a charitable fund to spend the Pooh windfall. One member, the ex-Tory chancellor, Lord Lamont, has called for a payout.

"I feel a little like Winnie the Pooh, when asked if he would like honey or jam, replied he would like both — and without the bread."

But another member, Douglas Matthews, retired London Library librarian, who is also a Royal Literary Fund trustee, said, "It would be entirely improper to give this money to Garrick members. It is surely not what Milne intended."

Garrick Club: some members want £39,000 payout

## Field berates Brown's 'fraud' scheme

Evon MacAskill, Chief Political Correspondent

FRANK FIELD, the former social services minister, renewed his attack on Gordon Brown last night when he portrayed one of the Chancellor's pet projects as an inducement to fraud.

Mr Field, who resigned from the Government last week, criticised Mr Brown's working family tax credit as threatening to pull "employees into a spider's web of dishonesty and corruption".

The Government, conscious that Mr Field could be a nuisance with his welfare criticism, organised a campaign at the weekend aimed at undermining him.

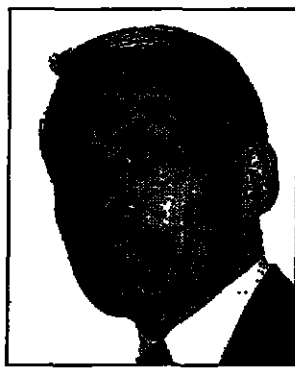
The Chancellor outlined plans for the US-style tax credit scheme last year, and the Treasury hopes to have it up and running next year. Supporters say the tax credit sharpens work incentives: those on low pay become eligible for tax rebates.

Mr Field, in his speech last night to the Social Market Foundation in London, said the working family tax credit "is fraught with great dangers". He listed these as:

- it offers huge bonuses for dishonesty;
- it strengthens the employers' hold over work people — these are "the" conditions; cheat, and both of us will be better off;
- it rewards employers paying low wages;
- it takes pressure off

Working family tax credit is threatening to pull employees 'into a spider's web of dishonesty and corruption'

Frank Field (right)



improving productivity and, thereby, the scope for increasing real wages.

Mr Field pointed his finger at Mr Brown when he made a Commons resignation state-

ment last week, accusing the Chancellor of blocking his proposed welfare reforms.

The former social services minister, who was given the task by Mr Blair of "thinking

the unthinkable", favoured an increase in the value of basic benefits while cutting down on fraud.

He said the working family tax credit could work if people were honest, but that was unlikely because employers could persuade workers "of the benefits of a very low wage which entitles them to maximum workers family tax credit with perhaps major cash payments on top of this fraud-determined minimum wage."

"Such an outcome is not, unfortunately, that uncommon, if the fraud officers with whom I talked recently are reporting correctly their findings — and there is no reason whatsoever to believe otherwise. A not uncommon tale is of a few thousand pounds put

through the books for tax and national insurance, yet many more thousands of pounds drawn from the bank which the employer, for some reason, cannot explain its purpose."

Mr Field, who opposes additional means testing, sees the scheme as a "major extension in means testing to the working poor". The alternative to a means testing approach had to be spelled out and "that is the primary reason I have returned to the back benches". He said the Government had crossed the means test Rubicon in two important respects — the working families tax credit, and offering a pension guarantee to older pensioners.

Gordon's fatal flaw, page 12

### News in brief

#### Hospital cleared over stabbing by patient

AN INQUIRY has cleared psychiatric hospital staff of blame for a patient who walked out and stabbed a baby in the street.

Maxim Calladine, aged 40, who had been in institutions since he was five, eluded staff at Highbury hospital in Nottingham in January 1987, bought a knife in the city centre, and stabbed 17-month-old Ashleigh Baker in the stomach as she sat in a pram. She recovered after emergency surgery.

A Nottingham health authority inquiry, headed by Michael Gunn, a professor at De Montfort University, Leicester, said the incident could not have been predicted or prevented. But, the report concluded, with the benefit of hindsight, communications between staff, and between staff and police, and risk assessments of patients could have been better.

A judge sent Calladine to a top security hospital after he was found unfit to plead to attempted murder. — Helen Carter

#### Baby deaths scandal for TV

A TELEVISION dramatisation of the heart operation scandal at Bristol royal infirmary, in which 29 babies died, is under discussion with Channel 4.

Following a General Medical Council inquiry, a surgeon and a former chief executive were ordered to be struck off, and another surgeon was banned from operating on children for three years. A public inquiry is expected next year. United Productions, which is preparing a 90-minute script, said: "We have a close relationship with the families. Our dramatisation will cover issues the GMC inquiry refused to deal with."

#### Crew eject as jet crashes

AN RAF Hawker Hunter jet burst into flames after overshooting the runway at RAF Boscombe Down in Wiltshire yesterday.

Both pilot and navigator ejected at near ground level but escaped serious injury; a helicopter from the base flew them to hospital in Salisbury where last night they remained under observation.

The TV Hunter, a two-seater trainer version of the obsolete fighter, was destroyed in the fire. It was one of three used as testbeds for new weapons and navigation systems evaluated at Boscombe Down.

#### MP to defend court case

FIONA JONES, aged 41, Newark's first Labour MP, was yesterday committed for trial next month at Nottingham crown court over allegations of making a false declaration of general election expenses. Also before a Nottingham magistrate was her agent, Desmond Whitcher, aged 73, charged with the same offence.

After the hearing Mrs Jones said she and her agent would "vigorously defend" their actions and show that neither of them had attempted to make an inaccurate return.

#### Girl aged 15 missing

POLICE were last night continuing to search for a girl aged 15 with a mental age of five who has been missing for more than 24 hours. A squad of 15 officers was searching the Newton Aycliffe area of south Durham where Rebecca Morton was last seen leaving her home at Wednesday lunchtime to go to the shops.

Police appealed for anyone who had seen her to contact them: "There was no obvious reason for Rebecca to have gone missing and she was not a girl who would have easily been led astray by strangers."

#### Football strip at cut prices

TESCO said yesterday it would continue selling the new Manchester United strip, the 13th in five years, at a quarter off the recommended price. David Savory, the supermarket chain's corporate affairs manager, said: "Umbraco is as mad as waste in a jam jar. They could sue us, but we are going to carry on for as long as we can."

He said Tesco would also sell Liverpool kit, and other Premier-ship strips as the season went on.

Claire Campbell, who hid her drug use from her parents and later died in hospital. They have urged other families to look for the tell-tale signs in their children and get help before it is too late



## Father's plea as woman dies after injecting heroin

Helen Carter

A YOUNG woman died after injecting heroin in the week the Government warned that use of the drug among teenagers had reached epidemic proportions.

The family of Claire Campbell, aged 21, had no idea she was using the drug until she collapsed at the weekend at the home she shared with her boyfriend in Haywards Heath, West Sussex. She was unconscious for three days in the town's Princess Royal hospital and died on Tuesday.

Yesterday Harry Campbell said his daughter, nicknamed Dinky, had hidden her drug use from them. "She was outgoing but she was easily influenced and fell in with the wrong company. A couple of weeks ago her twin sister Ingrid said she was very worried about her. They had been very close since they were little girls but Ingrid saw the people Dinky was with and decided she wanted nothing to do with them."

When she was confronted by her parents' accusations that she had been taking drugs, Ms Campbell denied it and told them not to worry. Mr Campbell, a retired businessman, said his daughter had taken cannabis when she was at sixth form college. "She had promised us she was having nothing more to do with drugs and we be-

'All we can hope now is that other families can learn from this tragedy and do not have to suffer the anguish'

lieved her," he said. "Only two or three weeks ago my wife Turid took her shopping and said how happy she was that she had left all that behind her."

"She was bright and enthusiastic, telling her mother how much she had enjoyed herself."

agents experimenting with heroin were under 16 and it was being sold aggressively to a new, young market as another recreational drug. Mr Campbell said his daughter had lost jobs as a legal secretary and a receptionist because of her absenteeism. "We now know that it was probably all to do with the effects of drug taking but

we had no idea what the problem was, at the time she disguised it so well."

Last week when he and his wife visited her they noticed her dilated pupils and she had been taking sleeping tablets prescribed by her doctor.

"She said she was coming home at the weekend but instead we got a phone call from the woman in the flat below

her telling us there was an ambulance at the house and Dinky was being taken to hospital," he said.

"We were just about to have dinner but we dropped everything and raced to her bedside. We stayed with her until doctors said they could not save her and she died."

"Nothing can bring Dinky back to us and all we can hope now is that other families can learn from this tragedy and do not have to suffer the anguish."

He urged parents to look for the tell-tale signs — sudden and inexplicable mood changes, unnatural behaviour, dilated pupils and slurred speech — and get help before it is too late.

Detective Sergeant Steve Tiffin, of Sussex police, said: "We are interviewing a lot of people in the area who may have information about Claire's death and where she got the drugs from."

"Her family are devastated by their loss. Her parents want her story to be highlighted so it doesn't happen to anyone else's daughter."

## Drumcree 'could split Church'

Rory Carroll

THE poisonous impact of the Drumcree stand-off on Northern Ireland's Protestants has enveloped the Church of Ireland and could crack it apart by next July, its official magazine has said.

Holding another Orange service at Drumcree church without agreement over the parade to follow would be catastrophic, said the editorial in the Church of Ireland Gazette. "The unity of the Church of Ireland would not survive it," it declared.

The article said last month's scenes of riots and mayhem had strained relations within the Church as never

before and exposed it to international condemnation.

The unwritten and unacknowledged agreement between the Church and Orangeism — an axis of Unionism — had come to an end, it said. A new relationship was being forged.

Members in the republic had been appalled that for the fourth consecutive year the Church had allowed Orangemen to use a religious service as a springboard for confrontations with the police over the right to march down the nationalist Garvaghy Road.

"Its leadership in Northern Ireland faced a challenge and failed to rise to it."

Being tainted with the violence and increasing political

sation of the Orange Order risked snapping a bond between members north and south, as well as within Northern Ireland.

"It is inconceivable that an Orange service will be held in Drumcree church next July in the absence of agreement about the parade which would follow."

A token presence of Orangemen remain camped outside the church. The chip vans and stalls have gone but church members fear they are indelibly implicated in a protest dubbed "Glastonbury for bigots".

The failed protest has sparked debate over tactics among Orangemen but the impact on the Church was

more fundamental, said the article.

"It is time to be talking about the nature and character of Orange services and about the flying of flags on church buildings. 'Parishes will need to think about their commitment to building the bridges of friendship and mutual respect with their Roman Catholic neighbours.'"

The Reverend Alan Harper, chairman of the Church's sub-committee on sectarianism, denied there would be a split if Drumcree was not resolved. "Talk about a split is to go too far. The scenes of disorder surrounding Drumcree have held the Church up to international condemnation."

### Working women still in charge of the kitchen, survey suggests

Annella Gentlemen

CLEARLY the sexual revolution has a very long way to go. A survey published yesterday revealed that women who work full time still devote much of their free time to cooking home-made meals for their families, unaided by their partners.

Quashing the perception that families where both partners have full-time jobs dine exclusively on pre-prepared microwave food, the survey of 330,000 people suggests that traditional domestic role models remain strong.

Old-style families, where the woman does not work, are only slightly more likely to eat home-made

food on a regular basis. Overall, 86 per cent of female respondents said they were solely responsible for preparing the daily evening meal.

Chris Lovell, director of advertising agency LVB Draftworldwide which conducted the poll, said: "This survey clearly shows that the predicted demise of the great British family meal-time has not happened."

However, Pat Zadora, national president of Business and Professional Women UK, remained cautious about the conclusions. "This survey implies that most women are still tied to the kitchen sink and I don't accept that. The division of labour is becoming much fairer, especially among younger couples."

"There was a term used in the 70s to describe the probation service, and it was 'screws on wheels'."

Decca Aitkenhead

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## education

Every Tuesday in the

The Guardian







# Lifetime chained to scandal for Lewinsky

**Gary Younge** in Washington assesses the toll on a key witness in the investigation of Bill Clinton

THE young woman from Beverly Hills 30210 took centre stage yesterday as she climbed the steps of the federal court house in Washington to give testimony that could deal a crippling, and possibly fatal, blow to the Clinton presidency.

When Monica Lewinsky was asked a few weeks ago what she wanted for her 25th birthday she is reported to have told relatives: "My freedom... I want my life back."

This time last year, if the testimony she planned to give yesterday is to be believed, she was an ambitious young woman with a saucy secret that of performing oral sex on Bill Clinton.

Now she is a virtual prisoner within her flat in the

Watergate complex — one of the most public figures in the country living one of the most solitary and lonely of existences.

At least in part, it is a predicament of her own making. Not only did she supposedly have an affair with the president, but she was indiscreet, sharing details with a friend, Linda Tripp, and keeping a dress allegedly stained with the president's semen as a rather crude memento.

But she could never have predicted that her confidences would be betrayed by Ms Tripp, putting her in the middle of a political storm that would involve members of her family and destroy her private life.

She has been unable to call friends because the phone might be tapped or the friend put under subpoena

to testify over whether Mr Clinton tried to persuade the former White House intern to lie under oath about their relationship.

She cannot leave her flat because she will be followed. Lawyers have advised her not to visit the gym at the Watergate complex because she might be photographed by tabloid newspapers. She could not even attend her mother's secret wedding for fear that the paparazzi might discover her presence and ruin the event.

She has no job and is hardly in a position to look for one. Shopping is usually left to a handful of confidants. On the few occasions that she does venture out it is in a blond wig, sunglasses and baseball cap.

Once, while taking a taxi to her lawyer's, she was spotted by people in another car who gave chase in the hope of getting a picture.

So she stays in, watching her past being dissected in newspapers and on television, and venting bitter resentment at every sight of Ms Tripp.

Investigators for Kenneth Starr — the independent prosecutor who is looking into Mr Clinton's business and other dealings — have raked through her phone bills, closets and e-mails, scoured her computer's hard drive and even procured evidence of the books she had bought.

Branded a tart and a bimbo, she has provided rich fodder for comedians and cartoonists alike. Mr Clinton's spin doctors have portrayed her as "Dakota" and even her former lawyer, William Ginsburg, has referred to her as an "immature" youngster with a tendency to "embellish".

In the hours of taped phone conversations recorded by Linda Tripp, Ms Lewinsky admitted she was a liar. "I have lied all my life," she said.

Yesterday she was reported to be confessing that she had lied again.

In an affidavit she submitted earlier this year in the sexual harassment case lodged against the president by Paula Jones — a woman who says Mr Clinton propositioned her in an Arkansas hotel room — Ms Lewinsky denied having a sexual relationship with the president.

Yesterday she was — if true to the terms of a deal she struck for immunity from prosecution — admitting to the grand jury in Mr Starr's investigation that she did have such a relationship.

Mr Starr hopes her testimony will help him nail the president — not as an adulterer but as a liar. Ms Lewinsky hopes it will help her get her life back.



Shielded by her father Bernard (left), Monica Lewinsky (centre) enters his Los Angeles home earlier this week before testifying in Washington. PHOTOGRAPH: DAMIAN DOVARGANES

## US calls for tough stand over Iraqi defiance

Mark Tran in New York

THE United States yesterday called for a strong international diplomatic response as Iraq stepped up its defiance of the United Nations by preventing a team of inspectors from carrying out searches for banned weapons.

Iraq's latest act of obstruction came as the UN Security Council and the secretary-general, Kofi Annan, heard from Richard Butler, the chief UN weapons inspector, on his failed talks in Baghdad earlier this week.

The council is expected to issue a demand for Iraq to resume its co-operation with the UN Special Commission (Unscm) supervising the destruction of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. The US and Britain are expected to push for a strongly-worded statement, while Russia, France and China can be expected to try to tone down any rebuke.

The council met the day after President Saddam Hussein froze co-operation with inspectors in protest at eight years of economic sanctions, renegeing on an agreement signed with Mr Annan in February that averted US and British air strikes. In that memorandum of understanding, Iraq pledged to "co-operate fully" with Unscm and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and to grant "unconditional and unrestricted access" to sites in Iraq.

"Iraq took a policy decision to stop co-operating with Unscm in August 1997 because it saw no end to crippling sanctions whether it worked with Unscm or not," said Khalil Matar, a Middle East analyst. "But efforts by France and Russia have managed to delay a confrontation."

Iraq's latest move again highlighted divisions within the UN Security Council. These began to surface even before Mr Butler's return to New York. Yuri Fedotov, Russia's deputy representative to the UN, implied that Mr Butler bore some responsibility for the breakdown in talks. He said: "We are strongly convinced that Iraq is not the only one to blame for this situation, when a decision has been taken to break discussions. This decision was

understand was taken by the chairman of Unscm without duly consulting the secretary-general and Security Council."

Russia and France also blame the US and Britain for contributing to the impasse by objecting to closing Iraq's nuclear file last month. Russia had urged the council to close the file based on an IAEA report which found no evidence of an existing Iraqi nuclear weapons programme, although it said many questions remained unanswered.

In its latest challenge to the UN, Iraq is demanding an overhaul of Unscm to lessen British and US influence and in effect the dismissal of Mr Butler, a blunt-speaking Australian diplomat.

Bill Richardson, the US ambassador, rallied to Mr Butler's defence, saying the US stood behind him and Unscm. "Iraq is not going to call the shots on disarmament," Mr Richardson told reporters. In his briefing, Mr Butler said he proposed discussing the substantive issues that remained outside the June schedule of work, such as VX nerve gas, concealment and implications of a recently found document concerning the verification of chemical weapons. Mr Butler said the deputy prime minister, Tariq Aziz, rejected both proposals.

Mr Aziz also insisted Mr Butler report to the council immediately that there were no more proscribed weapons and related materials in Iraq and that sanctions should be lifted immediately.

Mr Richardson yesterday accused Iraq of repeatedly violating UN Security Council resolutions and its memorandum of understanding signed with Mr Annan, and he called for "an appropriate, strong response."

But US officials admit that the Clinton administration has little appetite for military action because of a lack of international support, apart from Britain.

In Iraq a team of inspectors was stopped from carrying out their work because government officials refused to accompany them.

In another step towards confrontation, Iraq told the IAEA it could no longer carry out surprise inspections of Iraq's nuclear programme.



The writer Arundhati Roy, winner of last year's Booker prize, leads the demonstration against India's nuclear tests in New Delhi yesterday on the 53rd anniversary of the US atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. PHOTOGRAPH: RAVENDHAR

## Indians march in protest on Hiroshima day

THE Booker prize-winning writer Arundhati Roy was among those who led 5,000 people on a march through New Delhi yesterday to denounce India's nuclear test programme and mark the 53rd anniversary of the Hiroshima atomic bomb.

Shouting "Bread not Bombs", protesters warned that a similar catastrophe could occur in the subcontinent because of nuclear tests carried out in May this year.

"Both India and Pakistan now have the capability to perpetrate the horrors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on each other, not once but many times," a resolution said. "The people of India and Pakistan must stop this madness which threatens us with mutual annihilation."

In the Pakistani capital Islamabad only 200 people turned out for an anti-nuclear march. "Don't make our cities Hiroshima and Nagasaki," read a banner.

Mubashir Hasan, a former Pakistani finance minister, went to New Delhi to join the rally and said the tests were unnecessary. "There was no threat to either India or Pakistan, either from each other or from anyone else," Mr Hasan said.

In Hiroshima the Japanese prime minister, Keizo Obuchi, condemned the weapons tests that have hindered international efforts to restrict nuclear arms. "It is very regrettable that both India and Pakistan carried out nuclear tests," he said. — AP.

## News in brief

### Sumatra mass graves blamed on military

MASS GRAVES containing thousands of people apparently killed by Indonesian armed forces suppressing an insurgency in the province of Aceh should be investigated by an international team, human rights activists said yesterday.

In the past two months nine graves containing hundreds of bodies have been found in the northern region of Sumatra. But say activists, the authorities are reluctant to do anything about it. The Indonesian justice minister, Muladi, said the government still had to verify the graves.

Rufiadi, a lawyer with the Legal Aid Institute in the province, said: "Many people now do not trust the Indonesian authorities and are asking for an international team to come here to look into it all."

Most of the victims were reportedly killed by the Indonesian army between 1989 and 1992, during a crackdown on separatists. Events in Aceh have emerged since the death of the former dictator Suharto in May. — John Aglionby, Jakarta.

### Tunisian migrants to go home

ITALY and Tunisia yesterday signed an agreement giving the green light for the repatriation of hundreds of illegal Tunisian immigrants detained in Italy.

More than 15,000 illegal immigrants have been expelled from Italy since the spring and some 2,000 are at holding centres while Italian immigration authorities decide on their fate.

Lamberto Dini, the Italian foreign minister, welcomed the agreement as putting a brake on clandestine immigration into Europe. The countries are to co-operate in a crackdown on the smuggling of migrants, and Italy will provide economic aid to the poorest areas of Tunisia.

Mario Borghezio, a Northern League MP who called for immigrants to be returned with identification codes, said the agreement amounted to an expensive sting for Italy. — Philip Willan, Rome.

### Russia demands oil taxes

THE Russian government yesterday threatened to seize the assets and possibly reduce export quotas of three large oil companies that have failed to pay back taxes.

The government has toughened its stance towards tax-dodging oil companies, which are among the country's biggest export earners, to increase tax revenues.

Vladimir Popov, a spokesman for the federal tax service, said the oil companies Sidanko, Slavneft, Eastern Oil Company and Onakho had not paid taxes incurred between May and July. He said Sidanko, Eastern and Onakho face the possible seizure of their assets, but did not explain why Slavneft did not. — AP, Moscow.

### Hostage-taker extradited

ONE of the hostage-takers in the bank robbery that spawned the term "Stockholm syndrome" will be extradited from Spain, where he was arrested four months ago, Danish police said yesterday.

Daniel Demunyk was arrested in the Canary Islands in April at the request of Danish authorities who allege he is involved in Danish andamphetamine smuggling.

In 1973 Mr Demunyk, a Belgian, and another man held four people hostage for six days in a Stockholm bank robbery that went awry. The hostages developed close attachments to their captors, a phenomenon that has come to be known as the "Stockholm syndrome". — AP, Copenhagen.

### Singer attacks US racism

THE American jazz singer Nina Simone yesterday blamed racism in the United States for her decision to live abroad for the past 25 years.

Speaking to reporters in Beirut a day after arriving in Lebanon to sing at an annual festival, Ms Simone said that, as a black person: "I have paid a heavy price fighting the establishment." She did not elaborate, but said racial inequality in the US was now "worse than ever", adding: "I have not lived there for 25 years because of the racism."

Ms Simone, aged 65, took part in the civil rights movement in the 1960s and dedicated several songs to the cause of racial equality. She left the US in 1973 and lived in the Caribbean and Africa until settling in Europe. — AP, Beirut.

### Bulgaria's Zhivkov dies

TODOR ZHIVKOV, Bulgaria's Communist dictator for 35 years and eastern Europe's last surviving Stalinist leader, has died, officials said yesterday. He was 86.

Zhivkov, who died on Wednesday night, had fallen into a coma after being hospitalised on July 8 with a respiratory infection, the official BTA news agency reported. He had suffered from diabetes and other ailments in recent months.

Zhivkov held the record among his eastern European peers for time in office — from 1954 until his fall in the anti-communist revolutions of 1989. — AP, Sofia.

### Nevis ponders a split

ABOUT 6,000 voters on the island of Nevis will decide in a referendum on Monday whether to secede from the island of St Kitts, just two miles away.

If two-thirds of those voting say Yes, Nevis will become the hemisphere's tiniest — and one of the world's smallest — independent countries, boasting a population of scarcely 11,000.

Nevis, which covers 36 square miles, reluctantly joined St Kitts in a federation after the two islands won independence from Britain in 1983. Pro-secessionists say Nevis contributes 38 per cent of the federation's tax revenue, but receives only 21 per cent of government spending. If they win the vote, Nevis would become independent within the next year or so. — AP, Miami.

## Congo rebels attack oil port as uprising spreads

Alex Duval Smith  
Africa Correspondent

REBELS in Congo yesterday sent a powerful signal that their revolt had spread across the country when they flew into its main Atlantic oil port, more than 3,200 miles from the eastern command base of the uprising.

As the government of former Zaire threatened war against Rwanda, the eastern neighbour it claims planned the uprising, the rebels set out to prove that theirs was more than a revolt by Tutsis. They attacked the port of Muanda and a nearby hydroelectric power station which supplies Kinshasa, the capital.

Before a regional summit on the conflict in Zimbabwe today the Foreign Office advised Britons in Congo to leave "while there are still flights". In Kinshasa up to 10,000 people chanted anti-Tutsi slogans staged a demonstration backing the government.

The marchers carried stuffed effigies of two former members of President Laurent Kabila's cabinet — both Tutsis — whose defection on Wednesday added credence to the rebellion.

The rebels now boast a leader, Arthur Z'Ahidi Ngoma, the non-Tutsi opposition politician. He is supported by Bizima Karaba, the former foreign minister, and Deogratias Buzera, the president's

deputy aide, making the government's threat against Rwanda appear to be unconvincing.

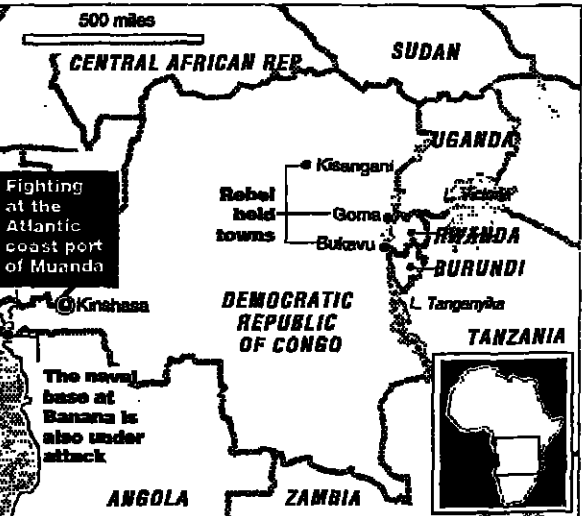
Didier Mumbenge, the government spokesman, said Congo would "extend the war into Rwanda" unless the international community put pressure on the tiny country to withdraw its troops. He said Rwanda was a "criminal state" which meddled in foreign affairs while drawing on "international pity" over the genocide of Tutsis in 1994.

The rebels, who began their uprising last Sunday in eastern Congo, are believed to include Banyamulenge — Congolese Tutsis originally from Rwanda — and Rwandan soldiers and troops formerly loyal to Mobutu Sese Seko,

the late dictator. The Banyamulenge and the Rwandans played a key role in President Kabila's victory over President Mobutu in May this year. But last week Mr Kabila, fearing a coup, ordered them to leave the country.

By last night the rebels had reportedly seized the key eastern cities of Bukavu, Uvira and Goma. Fighting continued in Kisangani, the largest city in the interior, as well as around Muanda, in the west.

The rebels fighting in Muanda flew there on Tuesday and are believed to be supported by members of a pool of up to 20,000 "Mobutist" troops. When the rebellion began, they were being "retrained" for assimilation into Mr Kabila's army.







Residents of an Athens suburb fight a fire that threatened to engulf a forested area yesterday, as a state of emergency was declared in the capital

PHOTOGRAPH LEFT: PIRANOS

## Ashrawi quits over crookery in Arafat ranks

Julian Borger in Jerusalem

**H**ANAN ASHRAWI, one of the best known Palestinian rights campaigners, has resigned from Yasser Arafat's cabinet, accusing the veteran Arab leader of failing to curb corruption in his administration.

Ms Ashrawi announced her resignation a day after Mr Arafat announced a long-awaited cabinet reshuffle. Despite widespread allegations of graft and mismanagement levelled by the Palestinian parliament, only one minister was sacked, and the cabinet was expanded, with the addition of 10 posts.

The outgoing agriculture minister, Abdel Jawwad Saleh, also resigned rather than accept a ministry without portfolio. He called the new cabinet a "tragedy".

Ms Ashrawi, an English literature professor who was the chief Palestinian spokeswoman during the groundbreaking Madrid peace conference in 1991, had been switched from higher education to the tourism ministry, but she refused to stay on.

"I believe that comprehensive reform was not addressed in this new government formulation," she said at a press conference. Earlier, she told reporters: "I believe when people called for change they didn't ask for additions. They asked for change in the ... status quo, but what we see now is maintaining what existed [and] adding people to it."

Whitney announced details of the reshuffle on Wednesday, he said his ministers were now making "fewer mistakes". But members of the parliament, the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC), jeered, and Mr Saleh cried out: "I'm convinced that there's no cabinet, and corruption has become an institution in the Palestinian system."

There are 26 ministerial posts in Mr Arafat's new cabinet, although six will be without portfolio, with no ministries to oversee. Ms Ashrawi plans to continue to work as a deputy in the PLC.

Mr Arafat's supporters said the expanded government would more fully reflect different interest groups in Palestinian society, but his critics said the absence of reform and the creation of new high-

salaried posts at a time of severe economic hardship showed the Palestinian leader was out of touch.

Ghassan Khatib, director of the Jerusalem Media and Communications Centre, said the new cabinet reflected "the growing isolation of the Palestinian Authority and the ruling Fatah party 'within both Palestinian society and the political spectrum'."

An independent PLC member, Ziad Abu Amr, said: "I think we failed the test of ob-



Hanan Ashrawi: real reform was not addressed in this new government

serving the principles of accountability and transparency."

Results of an opinion poll published yesterday showed that 56 per cent of the Palestinians questioned believed Palestinian political institutions were corrupt and described the cabinet and government offices as being the most crooked.

An independent audit carried out last year, followed by a PLC report earlier this year, detailed abuse of public funds by ministers who ran up bills of millions of pounds on hotel rooms, restaurants and overseas travel.

Much of the criticism focused on Nabil Sha'ath, one of the main negotiators in talks with the Israelis, but he kept his job at the key planning ministry — the channel for most of the \$200 million in aid which the Palestinian territories receive each year. Mr Sha'ath has denied any wrongdoing, and challenged his accusers to produce hard evidence.

## Mother 'killed eight babies'

Gary Younge in Washington

**A**N ELDERLY woman in Pennsylvania has been charged with murdering eight of her 10 children over a 19-year period, police said yesterday.

Marie Noe, aged 69, was arrested in Philadelphia on Wednesday after she confessed to police that she had killed four of her children as babies. She denies the charges.

The eight children ranged in age from a few weeks to 14 months. The series of unexplained deaths was reported sympathetically in the 1980s as cases of cot deaths, but the police never closed them.

They resumed investigation after the publication of The Death of the Innocents, a book which documented how doctors often overlooked evidence of infanticide because it did not fit with their theories on cot deaths. The book suggested that multiple cases of cot deaths in one family were rare.

A magazine writer read the book and wrote an article about the Noe case. The police saw it and called in Noe for questioning.

She allegedly confessed to killing her first, second, fifth and possibly third child, but had no specific memories of killing the other four. The doctor who performed the autopsy on her fifth child said yesterday that the deaths seemed "questionable" at the time.

Mrs Noe's lawyer says the confessions were obtained illegally and that the police have no new scientific evidence. Her husband, Arthur, is not a murder suspect.

In a magazine article earlier this year Mrs Noe said: "They really couldn't prove I did any harm to the children. Every one of them children didn't have a bruise, didn't have anything medically wrong."

Lynne Abraham, a district attorney, said: "We are increasingly confronted with evidence of this kind of crime."

## Show of power by Colombia guerrillas

Jeremy Lennard in Bogotá

**I**N WHAT is intended as a rebel show of strength before peace talks planned by the country's new president, Andres Pastrana, who assumes office today, at least 130 people have been killed this week in nationwide guerrilla attacks.

The offensive, which began on Monday, saw 55 raids on military and economic targets in 18 of Colombia's 31 provinces. The guerrillas traditionally step up attacks when a new president is about to take power, but the scale of this week's offensive is unheard of, said Alfredo Rangel, the former national security adviser to the outgoing president, Ernesto Samper.

General Rafael Hernandez, whose forces in the south took the brunt — referred to as a "catastrophe" for the armed forces and the nation.

The bloodiest confrontation took place at Miraflores, in the southern coca-growing province of Guaviare. From a base there, a joint force of police and army operate a US-funded anti-narcotics programme. Five hundred members of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) razed the base, killing at least 30 and wounding 50.

The remaining 100 troops who manned the base are reported missing and feared kidnapped by the rebels. It is unclear whether this included any Americans.

Similar casualties were reported from La Uribe in the eastern province of Meta.

Elsewhere the FARC and its smaller brother, the National Liberation Army (ELN), planted car bombs in most major cities and sabotaged oil pipelines and storage depots. They attacked army installations at electricity substations and dams, and stormed villages, destroying police outposts and rural banks.

Mr Pastrana expressed his determination to proceed with the talks.

## Athens put on fire alert

Helena Smith in Athens

**T**HE Greek government yesterday declared a state of emergency in the greater Athens area and the Peloponnese as forest fires tore through popular tourist areas, despite the arrival of firefighting equipment and personnel from Italy and France.

Amid scenes of panic as flames engulfed homes on Mount Pendeli near the capital, the entire state machinery, including soldiers and doctors, was put on alert.

The government said it

would impose an after-dark curfew on Pendeli, where fires forced the evacuation of local hospitals yesterday, and more than 1,000 residents fled their homes.

As the blaze swept down Mount Pendeli, killing an elderly resident, locals crammed their possessions into cars and fled. Others who refused to leave were seen frantically trying to put out fires with blankets, olive branches and hoses.

The public order minister, George Romalos, insisted the blazes were the work of arsonists bent on clearing land for property developers. He said police had arrested five

men armed with firecrackers and had found other equipment, such as timebombs and candles, in remote forest areas.

"We have a lot of evidence to prove that this fire attack has been pre-planned," he said. "Because of this we fear it will go on, which is why we have asked for help from abroad."

The fires, the worst in living memory, have left a trail of destruction. Much of Pendeli, one of Athens' last wooded areas, and vast swathes of the Peloponnese now resemble a war zone.

Police say more than 100 villas have been destroyed on

Mount Pendeli, where burnt-out tavernas, cars and charred scrub and trees now line the streets.

"The devastation is indescribable," said a local resident. "All our water and electricity supplies are off."

In the north and south of the Peloponnese, wind-whipped fires through the rolling countryside. Hundreds of people fled villages around the peninsula's port cities of Patras and Kalamata.

Television showed dramatic footage of old men, women and children diving for cover as flames the size of barns descended upon them. Two men died of heart attacks as they

watched their herds being burned alive.

Yesterday locals said they only narrowly saved ancient Olympia, the 2,000-year-old site of the first Olympic Games, located 110 miles south-west of Athens. Hundreds of locals rushed to the monument, seen as second only to the Acropolis, to fight the blaze.

The chaos deepened as new fires flared around the Greek-Albanian border, outside the resort area of Nafpaktos and on the Ionian islands of Corfu and Cephalonia.

The Greek government has faced fierce criticism for its handling of the crisis which

forced the prime minister, Costas Karamanlis, to cut short a holiday and hold an emergency meeting in Athens.

The opposition has accused the ruling Socialists of providing inadequate services. Greece has been hit by a record number of forest fires this summer, with more than 3,000 recorded in the past month.

Last night the government said the emergency measures would remain in force until the blazes were under control.

In Athens, which is home to almost half of Greece's population, there were fears the fires could find their way into the capital's leafy northern suburbs.

## Fight for Kosovo distorted by lies and half-truths

Both sides in the conflict use bush propaganda to bolster their own cause, reports

Peter Beaumont in Pristina

**I**N THE mountains of central Kosovo there is a makeshift shrine just off a limestone track. On a table covered with Albanian flags stands the picture of Adem Ademi, fallen warrior of the ethnic Albanian guerrilla force, the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA).

He stares out of the photograph with all the arrogance and invincibility of youth. Opposite, in an oak bower, the men of the nearby village come to sit and mourn with Adem's father, Ramadan.

Twice this week I met Ramadan Ademi, a farmer. Twice he told me the story of Adem's war and his death on the battlefields of Kosovo. The stories did not match.

In his first account his 28-year-old son had been killed by a sniper in the KLA's besieged stronghold in south-west Kosovo.

A day later, travelling through the mountains with a group of journalists, he told a different tale. Adem was 29, he said, and had been returning from Germany to join the KLA when he was ambushed by Serbs on the Albanian border. He died on July 15.

The war in Kosovo has become a breeding ground for convenient half-truths and lies. Adem almost certainly died fighting Serb police and soldiers. Probably, he died in July. But his father is doing what so many are doing in this conflict — reworking the truth to satisfy the demands of a curious media and the imperative of publicising his people's cause. It is bush propaganda.

Earlier, the spokesman of a group of refugees in the same region was quite blatant in asking our translator what he should say.

There are stories the ethnic Albanians simply want to believe — not only because they validate their struggle against the Serbs, but also because they somehow justify the suffering of tens of thousands who have been driven from their homes.

The claims of a mass grave containing up to 700 massacred civilians from Oranovac is one of these stories. That it was a site with grave markers, too small to contain so many bodies and next to the town's cemetery, was irrelevant to those Albanians and journalists who needed — and still want — to believe it was a "mass grave" for the massacred.

The story is resonant with a true tragedy of how the Serbs dumped up to 50 bodies from the fighting in a hole on a rubbish tip. They were bodies unclaimed by families too frightened to come forward. To complete the insult, two dead cattle and a horse were left by the entrance to the site until the Serbs removed them. The truth behind the grave at Oranovac is the humiliation of the dead.

A new narrative has been added to the stock of Serb abuses — the use of the poison gas phosgene. At every checkpoint around the fallen stronghold of Lasva, soldiers and civilians collar passing journalists to describe how they were gassed by helicopter or plane but miraculously survived. But they show no evidence. The KLA's field hospitals here is quite explicit. It is not only the ethnic Albanians who are guilty of bush propaganda. The Serbs are blatant in denying what is so obviously going on.

A Serb policeman challenged by a reporter as he walked away from an Albanian house he had just burned in an empty village said with a grin: "The house was made of wood. The owner must have been smoking."

Their distortions are not designed to wake a slumbering world to take note of their misdeeds. Instead they are evasions of the crimes of a police state that flow from President Slobodan Milosevic down.

According to one Serb journalist, "The difference between Bosnia and here is quite explicit. In Bosnia you would would come across a man with a smoking gun standing over his neighbour. When you asked why he had killed, he would explain that the dead man had been planning to kill him and that their families and people had been in a feud for two centuries, although the truth was that he really wanted to steal his tractor."

"Here when you come across a man with a smoking gun and a dead body and challenge him, he looks at you and says: 'What gun? What body?'"

## Poles refuse to remove cross at Auschwitz

Neil Bowdler in Warsaw

**T**HE Polish Catholic Church yesterday rejected a call from the Israeli government for the removal of a 28ft wooden cross and smaller ones from outside the former Auschwitz concentration camp.

Responding to a request from the office of the Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, the Polish primate, Cardinal Jozef Glemp, defiantly said the cross was staying put, adding: "This land is Polish and attempts by others to impose their will is seen as impinging on the sovereignty of the country."

The towering cross was originally used during the 1979 papal mass. It was brought to its present site outside the perimeter of the former camp in the late 1980s as a Carmelite order of nuns tried to avoid eviction from the international Jewish community. The nuns lost their battle but the cross remained and when, earlier this year, a Polish government minister indicated it, too, may go in deference to Jewish sensitivities, Catholics leapt to its defence.

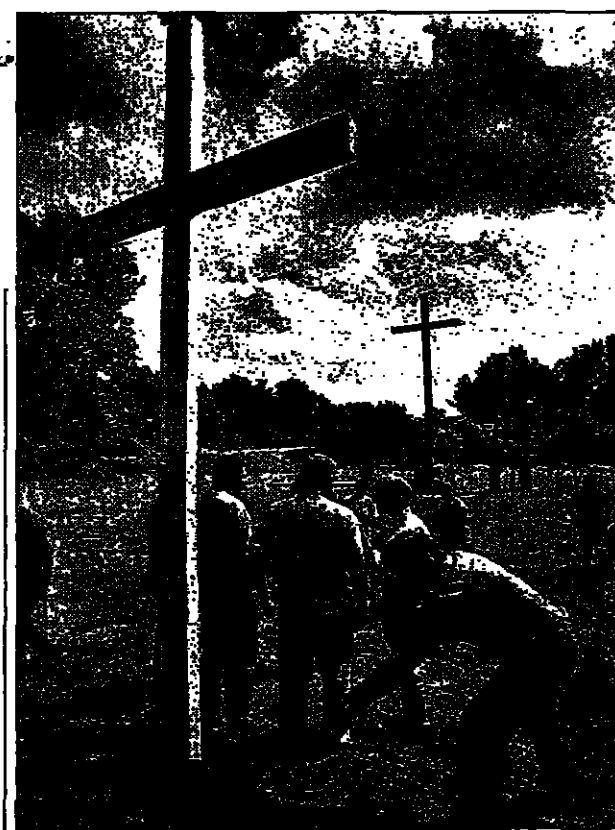
Daily prayers were orga-

nised under the auspices of a Committee for the Defence of the Cross; political support was lent by the Solidarity veteran and former president Lech Walesa; and Cardinal Glemp waded in, saying the cross stood for Polish national suffering everywhere, "be it in the Gdansk shipyard, Warsaw or Auschwitz".

A 42-day hunger strike was held under the cross by Kazimierz Switon, an eccentric Catholic extremist known for his anti-Semitic views. When Mr Switon was persuaded by Church figures to end his fast, he and his supporters erected about 50 crosses on the site. More have gone up subsequently, as Mr Switon voiced his hope to see 122 crosses, one each for a group of Poles shot at on the site by Nazis during the second world war.

Condemnation from Jewish Holocaust Memorial officials have called the field of crosses "a provocative act" by extremists and said the crosses contravene an international accord on the removal of all religious and political symbols from the Auschwitz-Birkenau site.

Calls for the removal of the



Catholic extremists put up more crosses near the Nazi death camp site in Poland

PHOTOGRAPH: ROMAN KOSZOWSKI

crosses have been interpreted by Polish nationalists as an assault on the site. Among them there is deep resentment at any role afforded to Jews in the conservation of historical sites in Poland.

The centre-right government has restated its position that the matter rests with the Church. Having recently had

its parliamentary majority slashed by the departure of Catholic nationalist malcontents, it appears unwilling to rock the boat further.

An estimated 1.5 million died in the Auschwitz and Birkenau camps, most of them Jews. Catholic victims are believed to number approximately 75,000.

## Delon blocks unwritten biography

Jon Hensley in Paris

**A**LAIN DELON, the film star whose Gallic good looks, tough on-screen image and dodgy off-screen dealings have made him an idol in France for nearly 40 years, has become the first person in French legal history to succeed in having his biography banned before it has been written.

A Paris court yesterday slapped a provisional ban on the investigative journalist Bernard Violot, ordering him to refrain from publishing his planned life of the actor, despite his having submitted only an 18-page synopsis.

Mr Delon said in March that he would retire from films after critics panned his



Alain Delon: 'Worried' about his controversial past

latest appearance, with Jean-Paul Belmondo, in Une chance sur deux, a cops-and-robbers comedy. He was alerted to Mr Violot's plans when Grasset, the would-be publisher, sent a copy of the

synopsis to his lawyers. The next thing my client knew, he was in court," Mr Chevrel said.

Mr Delon's lawyers submitted that the 18 pages were "filthy" and "evidence of a biography whose sole intention is injurious". The court ruled that the proposal amounted to an attack on the actor's reputation and private life.

"It seems a little bizarre to ban someone from doing something that he hasn't actually done," Denis Bourgeois, the publisher's managing director, said. Mr Violot, a respected author and investigator who last year published a book on Maurice Papon, the wartime collaborator, has said he will appeal if the final verdict, expected in October, goes against him.

The moody Mr Delon, aged 62, is known to have been disappointed by public indifference to his past three films, all box office

flops. It was in dozens of detective films, typified by the 1970 hit Borsalino, with Mr Belmondo, that Mr Delon made most of his fortune.

Mr Delon and his former wife Nathalie were embroiled in one of post-war France's biggest scandals when the corpse of Stefan Markovic, his former bodyguard, was found on a rubbish tip in 1968. The investigation implicated celebrities and politicians, and sparked rumours that touched the wife of Georges Pompidou, the future president.

Mr Delon, a friend of Mr Pompidou and of Francois Marcantoni, the retired gangster initially charged with the murder, was questioned by police, but the crime was never solved. Many feel it boosted the actor's image.

"It seems he's rather worried by some of the things that could come out," Mr Violot's lawyer said.



# Analysis The super league



Straw's screws  
on wheels  
12

## Fantasy football gets real

This week top English football clubs confessed their involvement in shadowy Continental conversations about a pan-European league. But is Silvio Berlusconi's Super League a genuine proposal or a bid in the big clubs' poker game with the football authorities? **John Duncan** and **Simon Beavis** knock the ball about.

What is actually being proposed? As far as anyone can tell we're talking about a closed shop. Europe's top teams — 32 of them — are being invited to join. There's no relegation or promotion as in the domestic leagues. The teams would play against each other, probably in four divisions of eight, with play-offs to decide the champions. There is vague talk too of some form of wider knock-out competition.

Who is doing the talking? The instigator is Media Partners, a marketing consultancy outfit based in Milan. It has been involved in negotiating pay-per-view television deals for football in Italy. It is not in fact owned by Silvio Berlusconi, owner of AC Milan, media magnate and founder of Forza Italia, a right of centre political party. But the company's owner Rodolfo Hecht does have links to the former Italian prime minister.

Mr Berlusconi is involved in talks with Rupert Murdoch, owner of Sky Television — and the Saudi Arabian investor Prince Al Waleed. Having decided not to sell his Mediastar broadcasting empire to Mr Murdoch, Mr Berlusconi has begun negotiations with him to challenge American dominance of the film business. Extending this to digital sports seems a logical next step. They are considering a pan-European venture which, if successful, might well buy rights to European super league football. Talks are said to centre on the three taking a 30 per cent stake in Germany's troubled media group, Kirch. No precise link has been established between these moguls. Nor would these men be the only people interested in securing rights to the league. But few other groupings would have such power or experience.

So is the super league a serious proposal? These people are serious but the importance of the talks that are now going on has been exaggerated. Europe's big clubs are frustrated with the conditions of competition in Europe and revenue but their interests are not all the same and they are some distance off boiling point. Several clubs have admitted talking to the Italians and their confederates about the league, including Manchester United, Arsenal, Ajax and Real Madrid.

"We are all looking for solutions for the world of football, to adapt to the times," said the president of Real Madrid, Lorenzo Sanz. He said the project would be open to any club that could contribute and predicted that the new super league to be launched within two or three years.

That sounds like a pretty serious sort of proposition. Not necessarily like a striker when the long ball goes up, none of the major European clubs want to be left behind. Something might catch on, they reason, so the best policy is discreetly to keep in touch. But not actually to sign anything. Clubs are however commercial entities. Stock-market rules have forced the two English clubs to admit what is going on. Their statements — almost identical — say a great deal about the cat-and-mouse game they are playing.

Manchester United (Arsenal) confirms that it is involved in discussions concerning the formation of proposed new European competitions. We would, however, stress that we are totally committed to the FA Premier League and other domestic competitions and are very mindful of our responsibilities to the governing bodies. There is no question of Manchester United (Arsenal) committing itself to a new competition until all appropriate consultations have taken place. Football is a developing industry and we have a duty to examine any serious proposal that we feel might be beneficial to Manchester United (Arsenal), its fans, shareholders and football generally.

Which translates as... We'll listen to serious proposals but we know which side our bread is buttered and we won't be risking our place in our domestic leagues just yet.

Will the super league happen? Yes and no. In many ways we already have one. There used to be a knockout competition called the European Cup in which all the champions of Europe competed in a knock-out. Every country got one entry whether you were England or Luxembourg. But the major countries thought this stank. None of their supporters were interested in this tournament until the semi-finals when they started playing clubs of their own size. They demanded a league system of only the biggest teams that would guarantee them a decent number of games. They got it in the shape of the Champions League.

So why isn't the Champions League the European super league? In many ways it is. Since it was formed the top two teams from the participating countries have been admitted to the league. For a couple of years the big clubs were happy. But there are several factors that are making clubs itchy. They want changes in

**League Collect the set**

<b>Liverpool</b>  Founded: 1892 Stadium: Anfield Rd Turnover: 1997: £28,153,000 Average attendance: 45,000 Euro roll of honour European Cup - 6/94	<b>Man Utd</b>  Founded: 1878 Stadium: Old Trafford Turnover: 1997: £37,936,000 Euro roll of honour European Cup Winners' Cup - 90/91; European Super Cup - 91	<b>Ajax</b>  Founded: 1900 Stadium: Amsterdam Arena Members: 70,000 in their country Euro roll of honour European Cup - 95; European Cup Winners' Cup - 87; UEFA Cup - 82; European Super Cup - 85	<b>Borussia Dortmund</b>  Founded: 1909 Stadium: Westfalenstadion Tickets: 35,000 season Euro roll of honour European Cup - 97
<b>Real Madrid</b>  Founded: 1902 Stadium: Santiago Bernabéu Euro roll of honour UEFA Cup 86; European Cup - 96	<b>Bayern Munich</b>  Founded: 1900 Stadium: Olympiastadion Euro roll of honour UEFA Cup - 1996; European Cup Winners' Cup - 97	<b>Barcelona</b>  Founded: 1899 Stadium: Camp Nou Members: Over 100,000 worldwide Euro roll of honour European Cup - 92; European Super Cup 94/95; Cup Winners' Cup - 96	<b>Marseille</b>  Founded: 1898 Stadium: Velodrome Euro roll of honour European Cup - 93 (first for a French team)
<b>Juventus</b>  Founded: 1897 Stadium: Delle Alpi Euro roll of honour European Cup - 96; European Cup Winners' Cup 84; UEFA Cup 85; European Super Cup 92	<b>AC Milan</b>  Founded: 1899 (by an Englishman as Milan football and cricket club) Stadium: Giuseppe Meazza Euro roll of honour European Super Cup 95; European Cup - 94		

its format. That is why many of us regard the shenanigans over the super league as a game. The threat of such a league becomes a stick with which to beat Uefa (the European football authority which manages the Champions League) to pressure it into conceding changes.

Why are clubs discontented with the Champions League?

Firstly they hate the uncertainty of having to qualify. It's a business argument. They argue that it isn't acceptable that one had season at home, missing the cut, can mean losing £10 million in projected income. The sporting notions of competition and challenge and the joys of taking part don't mean very much to the modern large clubs. The Premier League had a turnover of

£463 million in 1996/97 according to Deloitte Touche. That was £120 million more than the year before and the projected increase for 1997/98 is showing an equally sharp rise. Manchester United made a profit of £28 million on a turnover of £87 million. Eight Premier League clubs are listed on the stock market. Football clubs paid a total of £186 million in tax in 1996/97.

There is too much at stake here to risk it on the kick of a mere football. This is no longer a game.

Is it just in England that the big business argument applies? No. In each of the main football markets there are three or four clubs which have outgrown their leagues. They are much larger in income and interna-



**Frank Beckenhauer**  
German footballer, now president of Bayern Munich

**Zinedine Zidane**  
Juventus, national hero even to the National Front after securing France's win at the 1998 World Cup

**Louis van Gaal**  
Manager, led Barcelona to the Spanish league title last season, and Ajax to the European cup three years ago

**Michael Owen**  
Liverpool, stole the spotlight with that goal against Argentina. Bright future if unmarred

**Roberto Mancini**  
Former premier of Italy, now owner of AC Milan. Hopes intelligence

**Pedro Pablo Kuczynski**  
AC Milan, highly sought after but refuses to go

**Alex Ferguson**  
Manager of Manchester United, shipyard pot of Lord Gas Macdonald, pundit and Hoddle promoter

**Lorenzo Sanz**  
President, Real Madrid. Hears a club hopelessly in debt

**So where will all the new money come from?**  
Where it has for the past decade, television. Some 20 per cent of football club revenues are now derived directly from television — £92 million in 1996/97, according to Deloitte & Touche. In Italy earnings are even bigger with Serie A clubs raking in 32 per cent of revenues, or £122 million, from TV deals. Since the first exclusive television deal between the Premier League and Sky TV in 1992, a curious symbiosis has formed between soccer and satellite television.

But it is a junction which has become increasingly complex and steadily more fragile. Initially it was a marriage of convenience. It provided a new stream of earnings for football clubs desperately trying to fund their swelling wage bills and at the same time proved to be a ready way to build the audience and the profits of a struggling television operator. BSkyB, despite covering less than 25 per cent of households — is now Britain's most profitable broadcaster and that is thanks largely to football (and films). That message has been learned by a whole new set of broadcasters about to burst on to the scene.

Such as? The new digital televisions which are about to land on us. With the proliferation of new digital channels Sky is promising 300, the Cable television companies between 200 and 300 and OnDigital, the digital terrestrial venture between Granada and Carlton, an initial 30 — the demand for content is expanding fast and that has sent the value of football rights soaring. This has put the football clubs and the Premiership in the driving seat. The big clubs know that they are the main appeal for the television companies and is a sure way to be shared equally as is done under the current Premier League deals.

What about threats to expel clubs from the Premiership if they even think about leaving, or to ban them or their players forever from any Fifa competition, including the World Cup? That's a negotiating ploy. Both parties privately realise that they need each other. The top clubs are contractually bound to the Premiership, but some experts believe the strength of the bond is up for question. The Office of Fair Trading is trying to assess whether the Premiership is a cartel illegally binding the big clubs to it. If the answer is yes they might be able to break away contract or not. The key will be whether the Premiership can pressure Uefa to extend and amend the existing Champions League to make it a credible rival to a breakaway — something it will do in October. That is when we will see if there is any real appetite for battle by the clubs.

**Sources:** (1) Deloitte Touche annual review of football finance. Graphics sources: <http://www.uefa.com>

Graphics: Paddy Allen; Glyn Watton; Matt Buck. Research: Jan O'Brien.

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## Diary

Simon Bowers

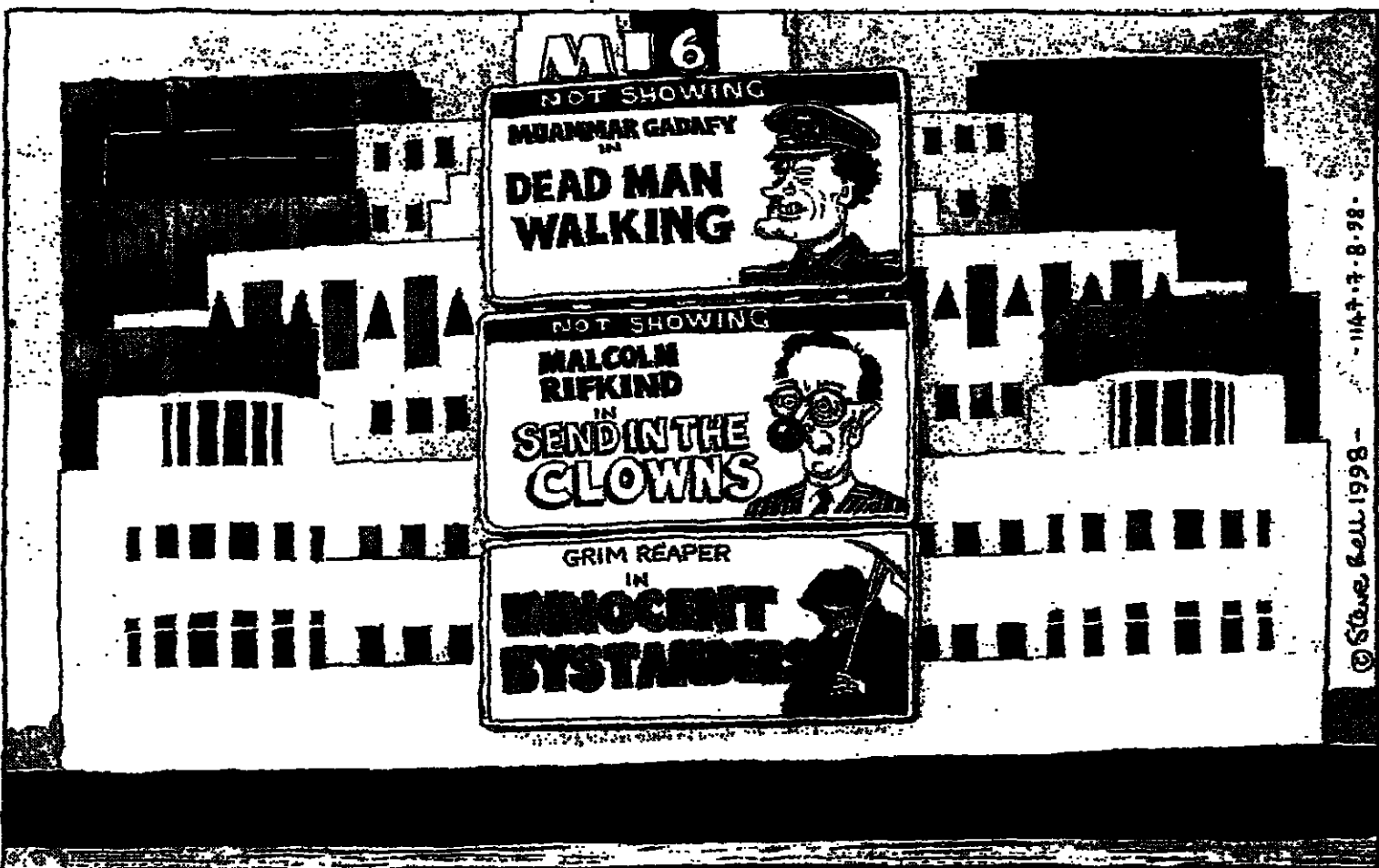
ONCE there was a paper which was proud to declare, "Our aims: the return of a Labour Government, nationalisation under workers' control of the banks, insurance companies, land and major industries..." Once there was a paper which could say, "Young Guard is an open and democratic paper produced and financed entirely by Young Socialists." Once there was an editor who respected only democratically elected authority. He could stand tall and proclaim: Young Guard "is run by its readers who hold regular readers' meetings, wherever there is support, and elect representatives to an editorial board which meets quarterly. This editorial board elects the editor and assistant editors necessary to produce the paper." Where are you now, Angus MacDonald?

THE gossip community's campaign of support for Daily Mail diarist Nigel Dempster, who is alleged to have struck out at his deputy Adam Belliker, receives joyous news. The ungrateful Adam is said to no longer be pursuing his Punch magazine-funded slander-by-gesture suit against his boss. To succeed Adam would have had to show that Mr Dempster created the false impression, in front of colleagues, that Adam had provoked him in some way. This unusual civil action was seen within the Dempster camp as the worst possible outcome, entitling the youngster to considerably more financial recompense than a criminal suit. Friends of the Master will recall how he was taken to court for printing a libellous remark last August, but was unable to convince Judge Richard Walker—who inexplicably described him as "inept"—that he was not a man of means, and was fined £10,000. We urge Mr D to stick to his convincing defence that Adam appeared to be about to hurl his boss over a balcony.

YESTERDAY the Trade and Industry select committee published its report on industrial and trade relations with Japan. "BNFL has a Japanese orderbook of around £2 billion and prospects for further orders of the same scale," reports the report. "BNFL enjoys a high reputation in Japan. The Tokyo Embassy has on its staff a seconded counsellor to look after this highly valued relationship." Closer students of Japanese history will know August 6 as the 32nd anniversary of Hiroshima.

THE Diary's People-Friendly Guide to New Labour Lexicon, running throughout August, comes closer to establishing its first definition. Our search for meaning in John Prescott's phrase "traditional values in a modern setting" has prompted FA Chairman Lord Harewood to write from Southwick. "Perhaps I can refer you," he writes, "to a phrase often heard in the messrooms of merchant ships"—our acting PM was, you will recall, a merchant seaman himself—"as the cook yet again recycles another bit of last Sunday's roast: same old shit, different sauce." A bottle of champagne goes to Mr Chalmers for an enchanting interpretation, though we are not sure it captures the full genius of Prescott's equivocality. If you have a New Labour sound bite you want analysed by our experts, or have a definition you want included in our Guide, let us know.

THE Incomes Data Services (staffed largely by leftwingers) released a survey yesterday entitled Directors' Pay 1998. At £250 the 100-page document is not cheap but, say some journalists who received a review copy gratis, it is nevertheless both a cracking and instructive read. When Tribune newspaper rang for their copy IDS editor Steve Tutton said he was unable to help without receipt of the cover price. "We didn't think it would be of interest to their readers, it wouldn't suit their market," explains a IDS press officer. "It wasn't a PR decision not to send them a copy, it was a commercial decision." Traditional values in a modern setting. Marvellous.



## Giving probation a new name is fine. As long as they don't change things

### Decca Aitkenhead



IT WAS the mark of Michael Howard that when he was Home Secretary he spoke wistfully of persuading ex-soldiers to sign up as probation officers. It is, likewise, characteristic of the new Labour Government to have misgivings about the probation service, and to propose, as a solution, to re-brand it. Yesterday, a Home Office minister announced some suggestions for a new name, such as the Community Justice Enforcement Agency. Ever sensitive to charges of Labour spin-doctoring, he vehemently denied that this was just a cosmetic exercise. Oddly enough, on this occasion one might hope that this is exactly what it is.

Official thinking behind the change of name is straightforward enough. Ministers believe the public regard probation officers as woolly liberals — "limp wristed folk in jumpers", as one penal expert put it to me yesterday — who use taxpayers' money to nanny criminals instead of punishing them. Probation orders and non-custodial penalties like community service are considered a joke, and offenders sentenced to them are routinely described by an indignant press as having got off "scot free".

If we change the name, goes the logic, we will make the probation service sound tougher. The media will take it seriously. The public will be reassured. Courts will thus be more willing to hand out non-custodial sentences, the work of probation officers will be respected and thus the possibility of fraud, of employers "persuading" workers of the benefits of a very low wage which entitles them to maximum WFTC with perhaps major cash payments on top of this fraud-determined minimum wage.

Such an outcome is not, unfortunately, that uncommon. If the fraud officers with whom I talked recently are reporting correctly their activities — and there is no reason whatsoever to believe otherwise — a not uncommon tale is of a few thousand pounds put through the books for tax and national insurance, yet many more thousands of pounds drawn from the bank which the employers for some reason cannot explain its purpose. I held responsibility for fraud for around 10 weeks. During that time a green paper was produced — thanks largely to the quality of the DSS civil servants. But during this time I set in motion the next benefit review. Family credit is now under the microscope. All benefits are to be reviewed in turn as part of the DSS's good housekeeping, and as part of the department's responsibility to parliament through the Public Accounts Committee. It is crucial we learn as much as possible about the angles which make family credit so vulnerable to fraud, so that this knowledge can be fully utilised in planning family credit's replacement — the working family tax credit.

To rely only on a means-

test addition to wages would be unacceptable. But that is not what the Government is proposing. A national minimum wage floor is being built into the labour market. If operated honestly, the working family tax credit will offer important support for dishonesty for both employers and workers.

It strengthens the employers' hold over workers. "These are the conditions of our wage floor. If we will be better off."

It thereby pulls employees into a spider's web of corruption. It takes pressure off improving productivity and thereby the scope for increasing real wages. The working family tax credit cannot therefore ever be considered as an end in itself. Any Government which introduces it needs to commit itself to an economic and education strategy which will, over time, as real wages for those at the bottom rise, make the credit of less and less importance.

The other immediate issue is the growing reliance on means-tested sup-

port, and ensure that those with children who work are better off than if they remained on benefit.

But the whole of the working family tax credit venture is fraught with great dangers. It offers huge bonuses

The working family tax credit venture is fraught with great dangers

port, and ensure that those with children who work are better off than if they remained on benefit. But the whole of the working family tax credit venture is fraught with great dangers. It offers huge bonuses

There was a term used in the 70s to describe a harsher probation service, and it was "screws on wheels". If the Government wants probation officers to be more like screws on wheels, it should be asked to reveal the amazing services to crime prevention with which the prison system can be credited. Britain's prison population is growing faster than anywhere else in the EU, three quarters of young men released in 1994 were reconvicted within two years; half were put back behind bars. The Home Office seldom asks whether we are getting value for money from prisons.

Prison very rarely works, but probation often can. To make it work, however, the service must employ people equipped to take on the chaotic and frequently disappointing task of keeping offenders from ending up back in court. This may well mean, among other things, assisting, befriending and advising. Obviously its job is to protect the public. That's the whole point of it. But protecting the public in the long term is best done by convincing offenders to stop breaking the law, something more easily achieved by a partial ally than just another hostile envoy of authority.

If the Home Office wants to change the probation service in order to inspire public trust, and give the courts the confidence to use its services, then it's an excellent plan. If it wants to reassure the tabloid press, such spin-doctoring is entirely welcome. But if a new name means the start of a new service, this is a worry.

One must hope that this is simply another great example of a new Labour triumph of style over substance.

There were other proposals

that it rather likes the idea of really making it much tougher, too.

Jack Straw has made no secret of his impatience with the probation service. He has, for example, dismissed Harry Fletcher, the highly regarded spokesman for the National Association of Probation Officers, as a relic from the 70s. Last year he delivered a blunt and public command to the police and Crown Prosecution Service: "The probation service should not be following an agenda which is separate from the communities you serve," he warned. He is reported to lament that the service is not in uniform.

In this Home Office report, particular attention is paid to the ageing legislation which still directs probation officers to "advise, assist and befriend" offenders.

This is not what the courts expect of probation officers, the report laments, and even less what the public expects, anyway. It's also anachronistic, and should be done away with. Like Clause Four, it might only be symbolic — but it's the wrong kind of symbol.

## Suburban horror

### Bill Buford



I AM going to introduce three members of a new generation of American novelists. Technically they don't need introducing — they all have books in print in Britain. But it is only recently that I've come to appreciate that, between them, there is something genuinely new — that, in their own individual ways, they are one of the things that's next.

The writers are Rick Moody, Donald Antrim, and Jeffrey Eugenides. They know each other, I discovered. They're about the same age — mid-30s. They went to the same small college in New England — Brown in Rhode Island — and took the same classes, including ones taught by Angela Carter, who was a writer in residence at the time. All three writers now live in Brooklyn, blocks apart, although they all grew up outside New York, in the suburbs somewhere in the middle of the middle of America. And that's the key.

Eugenides grew up in the suburbs of Detroit. Detroit is a city of Detroit. Big expensive Cadillacs are made in Detroit. Chevrollets, Ford pickups, heavy four-wheel drive Jeeps. Detroit is gritty, and blue-collar — the Born-in-The-USA sensibility. It's no coincidence that Detroit gave birth to soul music and ladies who sing the blues. But the suburbs are different: it's where the white people live. In fact, after the riots, it's where the white people fled. And Eugenides's father, a mortgage banker, was among them. He commuted to work and returned in the evenings to a home that was distinguished by its unforgiving pleasantness.

THERE was a giant fridge, full of giant American foods — two-gallon-sized plastic jugs of milk, TV dinners, stacks of minute steaks, and a 38-pound frozen turkey (for Thanksgiving). There were four television sets and seven telephones. This was the world of Donna Reed and Dick Van Dyke and countless American television shows of such banality that they captivated millions of people leading the same miraculously uneventful lives depicted on their screens. Rick Moody, a fellow suburbanite, confesses to watching hours of the stuff, six hours a day, a "TV junkie", while his father sat in the next room, watching his television knocking back a bourbon and peanuts, and Mom sat in the bedroom pretending to watch her television when in fact she was quietly having a nervous breakdown. American suburbs share

features of the British variety — the Surrey stockbroker belt or the experimental garden cities — but they are different, if only because they embraced so much of the culture at the time. No, this is the frightening thing: they were the culture at the time. But could any of this be the stuff of literature?

Recently I met up with the novelist Jay McInerney. We were talking about a project that involved McInerney's writing about his family, when suddenly these questions occurred to me. Why does McInerney write so exclusively about cities? McInerney, the novelist of nightclubs and glam models and late-night drugs, loves New York. I have met him on occasions when he has just returned to it, and seen him positively exuberant at the sounds of car alarms and ambulances stuck in traffic and the punchy stench of air pollution. And then it occurred to me: he grew up in the suburbs — that's why he likes urban fifth. He grew up in the suburbs and has spent the rest of his life burying the experience.

These three writers have responded to the horrors of their upbringing in a different fashion — and that is their genius. Donald Antrim's first novel, with its exquisite title, *Elect Mr Robinson For A Better World*, describes a neighbourhood of family homes with semi-circular drive-ways and local parks and careful lawns, and this unusual feature: the lawns are embedded with spikes (of the medieval torture variety) and the parks are stuffed with mines. Jeffrey Eugenides's *Virgin Suicides* offers up a community of barbeques, school yards, and elm trees — and a family of girls who keep knocking them selves off. At the heart of Rick Moody's *Ice Storm* (made into a film by Ang Lee) is a similar

Lawns are embedded with spikes and parks stuffed with mines

conflict: in fact at the heart of all these books is the same conflict: monogamy meets menace.

I asked Rick Moody: could you ever contemplate returning to the suburbs? "No way, no way, no way!" he said, horrified at an idea which he had obviously never contemplated. "The ideal of the suburbs in the 50s and 60s, he continued, "was to escape the thorny problems of the city. They were a refuge. But the solution has proven patently wrong. The idea of it — to go back to the suburbs — And there was a genuine shudder in his voice.

I am also an exile of the suburbs. I suspect I found my refuge in Britain, where I lived for 10 years. And for ages I've been wondering about how they don't ever get written about. And then, like a puff of smoke, a group of writers discovers how to do it. Thank you, Angela.

The Chancellor's welfare plan offers huge bonuses for dishonesty for workers and employees

## Gordon's fatal floor

### Frank Field

THE working family tax credit will amount to a major extension in means-testing in working poor. The most immediate is the possibility of fraud: of employers "persuading" workers of the benefits of a very low wage which entitles them to maximum WFTC with perhaps major cash payments on top of this fraud-determined minimum wage.

Such an outcome is not, unfortunately, that uncommon. If the fraud officers with whom I talked recently are reporting correctly their activities — and there is no reason whatsoever to believe otherwise — a not uncommon tale is of a few thousand pounds put through the books for tax and national insurance, yet many more thousands of

tested addition to wages would be unacceptable. But that is not what the Government is proposing. A national minimum wage floor is being built into the labour market. If operated honestly, the working family tax credit will offer important support for dishonesty for both employers and workers.

It strengthens the employers' hold over workers. "These are the conditions of our wage floor. If we will be better off."

It thereby pulls employees into a spider's web of corruption. It takes pressure off improving productivity and thereby the scope for increasing real wages. The working family tax credit cannot therefore ever be considered as an end in itself. Any Government which introduces it needs to commit itself to an economic and education strategy which will, over time, as real wages for those at the bottom rise, make the credit of less and less importance.

The other immediate issue is the growing reliance on means-tested sup-

port, and ensure that those with children who work are better off than if they remained on benefit.

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# Money, money

## Clubs must play fair

FOOTBALL is a developing industry, said Manchester United in justifying its "conversations" with shadowy Continental about a break-away pan-European football league. But football is much more than money and much less than spinning money. This is sport, activity in and for itself. It has an ethos and a huge body of public hope and expectation behind it. Go too far down the big money road and the moguls take over the people's game. All they are left with is another version of Gladiators. On the pitch winning-at-all-costs becomes the order of play. No robo-ref, however well endowed by technology, is going to control a match where players have nothing in their heads but bonuses and the next Porsche.

Money has lately been flowing thick and fast. Transfers — even from clubs as lowly as Wrexham — command telephone numbers. Players, step forward young Michael Owen, become uninsurable. Deloitte & Touche calculates the Premier League netted £464 million the season before last. There's no point in regretting commerce or the application to football of its rules of contract. New revenue had to arrive. Tickets had to get dearer if matches were to be made safer and more comfortable. Top-rank players deserved more pay. The questions now concern how well the largesse of satellite television is being used and whether football is ignoring the example of rugby union and overpaying a small number of top dogs. The doubts are about equity and collectiv-

ity, and the obligations of the rich towards the poor, the duties and responsibilities of "clubs" that are still much more than mere private firms, whether their stock is quoted on the Stock Exchange or not. Such anxiety is likely to grow since there's more money to come. Silvio Berlusconi may have been thwarted by clean-handed Italian magistrates and the Olive Tree coalition but magnate he remains. As we know from Tony Blair's talk with Romano Prodi, tie-ups with Rupert Murdoch are in prospect.

Looking to the future, including the mooted European Super League — to which there may be less than meets the eye — football has to remember its roots. Millions of Catalans reverberate to events in Nou Camp. Merseyside's identity and destiny are bound up with the fate of Liverpool (and Everton ... and Tranmere Rovers). These "clubs" are civic as well as commercial entities. Football, in England, is also unfortunately a vehicle for anti-social expression. New police figures show less hooliganism but football remains dangerously attractive to a hard, perhaps growing core of violent men. They showed up at the World Cup as people who could afford it. But football's social class ascent carries with it the risk of exclusion. Paying for seats, paying for satellite television access, paying for expensive team shirts: good football is regrettably no longer for poor people.

In their talks about the future, chairmen and managers should bear in mind that this game does not belong to them. It has a dense undergrowth in smaller clubs and the millions who watch at home — growing numbers of women among them. Wrexham, Tranmere and Liverpool do belong in the same universe. Changes in the configuration of European club competition look likely. Uefa is going to come up with proposals for changing the Champion's League

(successor to the European Cup) but the idea that top clubs could seal themselves in some offshore enterprise is not only self-defeating but dangerous. Football's juices are local. They would dry up if some top echelon cut itself off. In the politics of the European Union there's a principle of subsidiarity which says those things best done locally should remain within the purview of local or national authorities. It applies in football, too.

## Kabila's cabal

### It needs a Congolese solution

AS THE Congolese revolt spread yesterday to the Atlantic Coast, a return of last year's successful insurrection only with a different cast — became more likely. Having swept to power last May, President Laurent Kabila may soon appear only a brief first act in the post-Mobutu era. The relief then when he emerged from the bush was overwhelming. After decades of despotism on which Western strategic interests had shamefully smiled, former Zaire had a new chance. The scenes of rejoicing then along the rebel march to the capital were genuine. The tragedy is that once again the people's trust has been betrayed.

It was no secret that Mr Kabila came to power with military support from Tutsi-led Rwanda and from the eastern Congolese of the Tutsi minority. Strict regard for the principle of non-interference in internal affairs is hardly feasible across the arbitrary frontiers of colonially fractured Central Africa. And almost anything was justified to get rid of Mobutuism. (The same could be said of foreign support for the Rwandan insurgency which ended the Hutu-led genocide.) However Mr Kabila was

always a dubious quantity with a past history of opportunism and no perceptible guiding force except ambition. Sworn in to rule by decree he banned political activity for two years. His co-operation with the UN team investigating alleged massacres of Hutus in the east was ambiguous. His new government was quickly packed with supporters. Yet what may now bring him down is not a shortage of principle but a lack of consistency in choosing his allies, by turning against the Rwandans and domestic Tutsis who had brought him to power. The new rising follows his expulsion of Rwandan military advisers, and began soon after he had moved to lessen Tutsi influence in his regime.

Events in the last few days seem to be a replay, at enhanced speed, of the rebel build-up in autumn 1996. While the main towns in the east have quickly fallen, a new standard of Congo for the Congolese is being raised. Mr Kabila's foreign minister Bizima Karaha — a Congolese Tutsi — is heading up the rebellion, while a non-Tutsi politician Arthur Z'Ahidi Ngoma is named its political co-ordinator — the title given to Kabila before. More darkly, there are hints of financial backing from former Mobutists. Mr Ngoma says this is not a Tutsi struggle but a "struggle for all Congolese": as the next act begins, we can only hope against hope that this time it may be true.

## Arthur's slate

### Is he better as fact or fiction?

THE discovery of a slate with "Arthur" written on it during the last week of a season of archaeological excavations at Tintagel Castle (and revealed at the start of the Silly Season) might suggest that the person

behind it was Arthur Daley rather than Arthur Regis. But the find at Tintagel — the supposedly mythical birthplace of the (still) legendary King Arthur — appears to be a genuine historic discovery. It has already excited expert historians and is bound to re-ignite the almost magical worldwide appeal of the story of King Arthur. Excalibur, the Knights of the Round Table, Queen Guinevere, Merlin and Camelot. It won't do any harm either to the tourist appeal of Tintagel Castle in Cornwall (open daily, adults £2.70, children £1.40) and the local economy which is almost entirely dependent on the legend.

Dr Geoffrey Wainwright, English Heritage's chief archaeologist, described it as "the find of a lifetime". But he emphasised that although it was remarkable that a stone dating from the sixth century had been found inscribed with the name "Artognov" there was no evidence to link it either to the historical warrior Arthur (a genuine 6th-century warlord who roamed the country) or the legendary King Arthur. The latter appears to have been largely the confection of Geoffrey of Monmouth in the 12th century — and later embellished by Sir Thomas Malory and Lord Tennyson.

A myth that has survived so long without historical legs can only be nurtured by the revelation that there really was someone called Arthur living at the same place around the same time. But whether we want facts to intrude any further is a moot point. Legends like that of King Arthur often have greater power to influence us than real events. History's spin doctors have already done a pretty good job on him. The country is littered with monuments in the form of King Arthur's caves or King Arthur's stones each with their own local appeal. Maybe the myth and the man shouldn't come too close together. Sometimes truth needs to be kept at a distance — so memories can live on.

## Letters to the Editor

### New lads and other wets

I AM, by now, used to being dragged, on the most spurious of grounds, into stories about cronyism and New Labour. But I have to make a stand over Helen Wilkinson's implication that I am part of a "new lad" football mad clique within the party (Faced with Labour's lads, August 6). As anyone who knows me will testify, I cannot bear the game. I have never played it or watched it (even on TV). At last a twist to the cronygate scandal where my lack of involvement and therefore innocence is unquestionable. And surely an "own goal", as I believe it's called, for Wilkinson's rather ludicrous conspiracy theory. Derek Draper, London.

YOU refer to Heineken as "Dutch lager" and say Whitbread "distributes the lager in Britain" (Lager ad attempts to freshen up act, August 3). The Heineken sold in this country is not Dutch. It is brewed by Whitbread in Britain, as are Stella Artois, Murphy's Stout, Holsten Pils and other brands they try to pass off as imported to justify a high price. Stephen Hughes, Wirral, Merseyside.

GEORGE Wolfe (Letters, August 6) and Harry Einfeld are both right. Both characters take their clothes off in the barn scene in Equus. I refer you to the film version, where the roles are taken by Peter Firth and (somewhat inevitably, for a British film of the era) Jenny Agutter. Tim Footman, Wallington, Surrey.

MAY I suggest that the Met Office amend their "comfort index" to include more typical British weather conditions? More appropriate would be: Slightly wet; Moderately wet; Extremely wet; and Absolutely F\*\*\*ing soaked. Catherine Lewis, Bristol.

HOW are regular letter-writers to reach the next peak, an extract at the top of the page? Montagu Bream, Chinoor, Oxford.

## Feedback for Mr O'Brien

I AM a British citizen; my husband is an Algerian asylum-seeker. Mike O'Brien (It's better now, August 6) claimed there is no "culture of disbelief", I cannot agree. The Home Office presenting officer at my husband's asylum appeal made it quite clear that there is a total disbelief in any claim of potential threat to life from an Algerian — despite the well-documented atrocities which have occurred.

Mike O'Brien claims officials "constantly put to me recommendations for compassionate decisions". My husband's claim for compassionate consideration barely had sufficient time to touch the official's desk before being refused. The specifics of our relationship and the circumstances surrounding our marriage had received no consideration.

The attitude of immigration officials to asylum-seekers appears to be entirely based on the assumption that their only reason for seeking asylum is to receive free accommodation and claim benefits. My husband was a successful businessman in his own country with his own premises, home and car. He has never claimed any benefits or state accommodation. He considers it to be a great shame that he has been forced to apply for asylum, but he feels he has no choice because he has a genuine fear for his life, a fear demonstrated to me by

his constant nightmares. The final twist to this tale is that I am a Home Office employee. The situation remains that my employer expects me to leave my job, my country and family, and risk my life and my husband's by returning to Algeria for him to apply for re-entry to the UK as required by immigration rules. Is this compassion or fair and decent treatment? Name and address supplied.

MR O'Brien claims that the Refugee Legal Centre's high success rate at appeal is that it carefully selects the appeal cases it promotes. He states that the fairness of Home Office decision-making is demonstrated by the fact that only 6 per cent of appeals against their decisions are successful.

In fact, the RLC accepts instructions from asylum appellants on a first-come-first-served basis, regardless of merit. Nonetheless, our success rate in appeals cases this year is over 25 per cent.

Other competent representatives achieve similar success rates at appeal. And yet only 6 per cent of appeals are successful. The little research conducted in this area indicates that unrepresented appellants have a negligible chance of success. There is no legal aid for representation at appeal hearings. The burden of representing asylum appellants who cannot afford to pay for representation therefore

falls on the voluntary sector. The RLC is turning away 800 appellants a month because of lack of resources. Chris Daily, Refugee Legal Centre.

THE root cause of the mess in the asylum system is that there are simply not enough caseworkers employed to process applications. This leads to backlogs and delays, encourages abuse in the system and means that the genuine applicant has to wait years for a decision. The modest increase in funding proposed by the asylum white paper will not come close to solving this problem. The "casework programme", a multi-million pound investment in computer equipment, is in serious difficulties and over a year behind schedule.

It is not Mr O'Brien's fault that contractual obligations with private suppliers have saddled him with a defective programme he inherited from the last government. But his efforts to remedy the pattern of case management in the Immigration and Nationality Directorate, involving almost every kind of initiative except the simple expedient of hiring more staff, have so far proved wholly ineffective. Not good news for genuine refugees or the staff who work there. Mike Moran, Simon Bentley, Andrew Fleming, Public and Commercial Services Union.

## Both sides dig in over Kosovo

IT IS not only President Milosevic who is devious about Kosovo (Leader, August 5). The Government and EU are concerned to prevent the break up of Macedonia. But the Albanian minority of Macedonia will be inexorably drawn into the conflict if they witness the slaughter of the Albanian majority of Kosovo, while the democracies do nothing. Richard Moore, London.

IT IS the KLA that is responsible for the escalation of the conflict in Kosovo this year. Initially by attacking police and kidnapping and murdering civilians (both Serbian and Albanian) and, more recently, by forcibly taking control of large areas of land.

The KLA is a nationalist organisation whose goal is to create an ethnically pure Greater Albania, incorporating not only Kosovo but parts of Macedonia and Montenegro as well. It has chosen to abandon the rule of law and adopt the law of the jungle. So long as the possibility of Western intervention exists the KLA will have good reason to choose war over negotiations. George Tintor, London.

reply "could you wait a minute?", knowing that it would be a significant wait. This was not what I trained for, to have to cut corners, compromise my standards and leave a dying man in a unseemly bed.

His wife, in her distress, screamed at me that I was "not doing my job properly". She was telling me what I'd known for some time. I left.

Nurses are not leaving the health service purely because of the meagre salary they receive. They leave because they are unable to provide an acceptable level of care and treatment, through inadequate staffing levels — and this is prior to the current shortage of nurses. Louise Leach, Brighton.

## Don't nurse any hopes we'll return to the health service

THE Secretary of State for Health has announced additional funding for the NHS, part of which will be used to employ an extra 15,000 nurses (Pay in full promise to nurses, August 5). Good news, one might think. But ever since this announcement was made, I have experienced an anxiety dream which would like to share with you.

Full of naive optimism, I accept Frank Dobson's kind invitation to return to work as a staff nurse in my former hospital. Within seconds, however, I am struggling to cope: I have a ward full of sick patients in need of blood transfusions, IV drugs, CVP monitoring and so forth, all of which I am trying to manage on my own because I am the only qualified nurse on duty.

If my patients need any more than that, such as a kind word or a sympathetic ear, they will be disappointed because I am no longer even trying to be a good nurse.

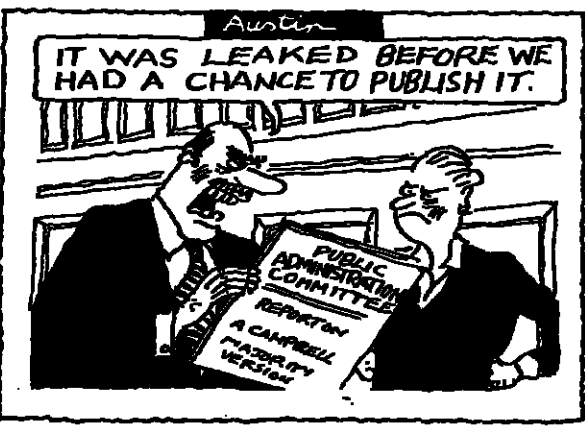
The situation on my ward is not only desperate, it is dangerous, and the best I can do is run around like a headless chicken trying to ensure that none of my patients has an accident or receives the wrong treatment when my back is turned, while praying that most of them will remain alive and safe — at least until I have gone off duty.

Fortunately, I usually wake up fairly quickly, and remember that I resigned from the NHS almost three years ago. I cannot believe that Mr Dobson is a stupid person, but he seems to believe that I am.

In order to entice me to return to crisis-managing the health service, Mr Dobson has made the very generous offer of an extra £7.50 (on average) in our weekly wage packets. All I can say is, "Thank again, Mr Dobson!" Patricia Barden, London.

AS a staff nurse working on a 26-bedded acute medical ward, with the support of two junior student nurses, I was approached by the wife of a patient: her husband, unconscious and dying, was lying on a urine-soaked bed. She wanted us to change his linen.

Unfortunately, there was a queue of similar requests, each equally deserving of an immediate response. As was so frequently the case, I had to



## Lambeth lambasted

MADEIRA Bunting has had some fun at the expense of the Anglican episcopacy (Unholy and unreal, August 6), but she has not put her finger on what should be the real business of Lambeth. XIII. If the bishops have done some serious Bible study, should they not be confessing the collective guilt of Christianity and admitting that the Bible, far from being the word of God, is a collection of myths which bear little resemblance to reality?

The one chance Canterbury has to wrongfoot Rome (which once ordained me) is to be honest and truthful, as it was in the 1960s over contraception. Now that we know the history of the universe, the facts of evolution and DNA, and the circumstances in which the books of the Bible were written and selected, the time has come to own up.

Christianity is a fraud. European history is largely a record of the atrocities its argumentative and divided followers perpetrated. We, who once believed, apologise to the memories of the people called heretics, witches and dissenters. The cathedrals should be made over to English Heritage.

## Acid response

IN the profile of Irvine Welsh (The Skinny and The agony, July 25), Andy Beckett alludes to two of my books, Getting High, The Adventures of Oasis, and The Greatest Footballer You Never Saw, The Robin Friday Story.

Apparently, Welsh's praise rang from the cover, amplifying a matter of minority interest into something worth "noticing". I can only assume that prior to interviewing Irvine, the writer ingested a few acid tabs, obliterating his eyesight.

Neither of the book's covers carry an endorsement from Irvine and deliberately so. Although in each case Irvine offered to supply a quote I turned him down. I felt there were too many books using his name to attract buyers. Instead, I placed a quote from him on the inside of the Oasis book (paperback edition) and was honoured when he wrote a forward for the Robin Friday bio.

If Mr Beckett believes the Oasis story is a matter of "minority interest", then I send my sympathies and suggest he get back on the LSD. Pronto. Paolo Hewitt, London.

## Another Shayler brother rallies to the cause

LORD Williams, commenting on the actions of my brother, David Shayler (Letters, August 5) states that "Those publishing stories... can also risk lives". I understand that the objectives of the security services are to ensure the security of Great Britain and its inhabitants, but surely my brother's comments have in no way jeopardised any lives? He has criticised the inefficiency of MI5, the low morale, excessive drinking and bungled operations.

Surely it is this ineptitude that has placed the lives of innocent people at risk, not my brother's revelations? If the authorities had been willing to listen to David during the past year, when he tried at length to negotiate with them, then it would have been possible to ascertain whether the accusations were indeed true. However, the Government requested that David be extradited from his new home in France and he now languishes

in a prison cell in Paris. Whether you believe my brother's revelations or not, the current treatment of David is a disgrace. As my younger brother, Jeremy, stated (Letters, August 5), our brother is being held in a tiny cell for 22 hours a day with little or no contact with the outside world. It appears that David might remain in his surroundings for several months despite the fact that he has not been found guilty of any charge. This is surely not justice.

Lord Williams writes that the Government's objective is "to stop disclosures which would cause real damage to national security". My brother's revelations have never risked national security — they have merely brought into the public consciousness how the inefficiency of MI5, the organisations which is supposed to protect us, has itself put national security at risk. Phil Shayler, London.

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Todor Zhivkov

# Bulgaria's last dictator

**T**ODOR Zhivkov, who has died aged 85, was the former Soviet bloc's longest-serving communist dictator. He ruled Bulgaria for 35 years as if it was his country estate, but fell foul of the Gorbachev revolution in 1989, was ousted and spent his final years under house arrest.

Within a year of Stalin's death, Zhivkov had become head of the Bulgarian Communist party and for 35 years presided over a regime that combined docility towards the Kremlin with nepotism, patronage and corruption on a staggering scale at home. Born into a peasant family in Pravets, a mountain village outside Sofia, he was working as a printer in the Bulgarian capital in the 1930s when he embarked on a lifetime in Balkan communist politics. A leading partisan fighter against the Nazis in Bulgaria in the second world war, he played a role in the communist takeover in 1944 and within six years of the end of the war, at the age of 40, he gained a seat on the party politburo.

After 1954, when he was made party premier, he spent his early years in power purging his internal rivals — by

1961 succeeding in concentrating power in his hands, to pave the way for a quarter century of absolute rule during which he, his family, and his cronies amassed considerable wealth. Zhivkov's Bulgaria became notorious for its ruthless cloak-and-dagger espionage activities and for its willingness to operate as a proxy for the KGB abroad.

Zhivkov served the Kremlin well, earning Bulgaria the nickname of being the Soviet Union's 16th republic. In return, he was left to rule in the manner of a Balkan tsar and mafia mobster. Hunting lodges, luxury yachts, former royal palaces were among the 30 residences he maintained for his exclusive personal use. The Zhivkov "clan" spawned dozens of Balkan millionaires with Swiss bank accounts.

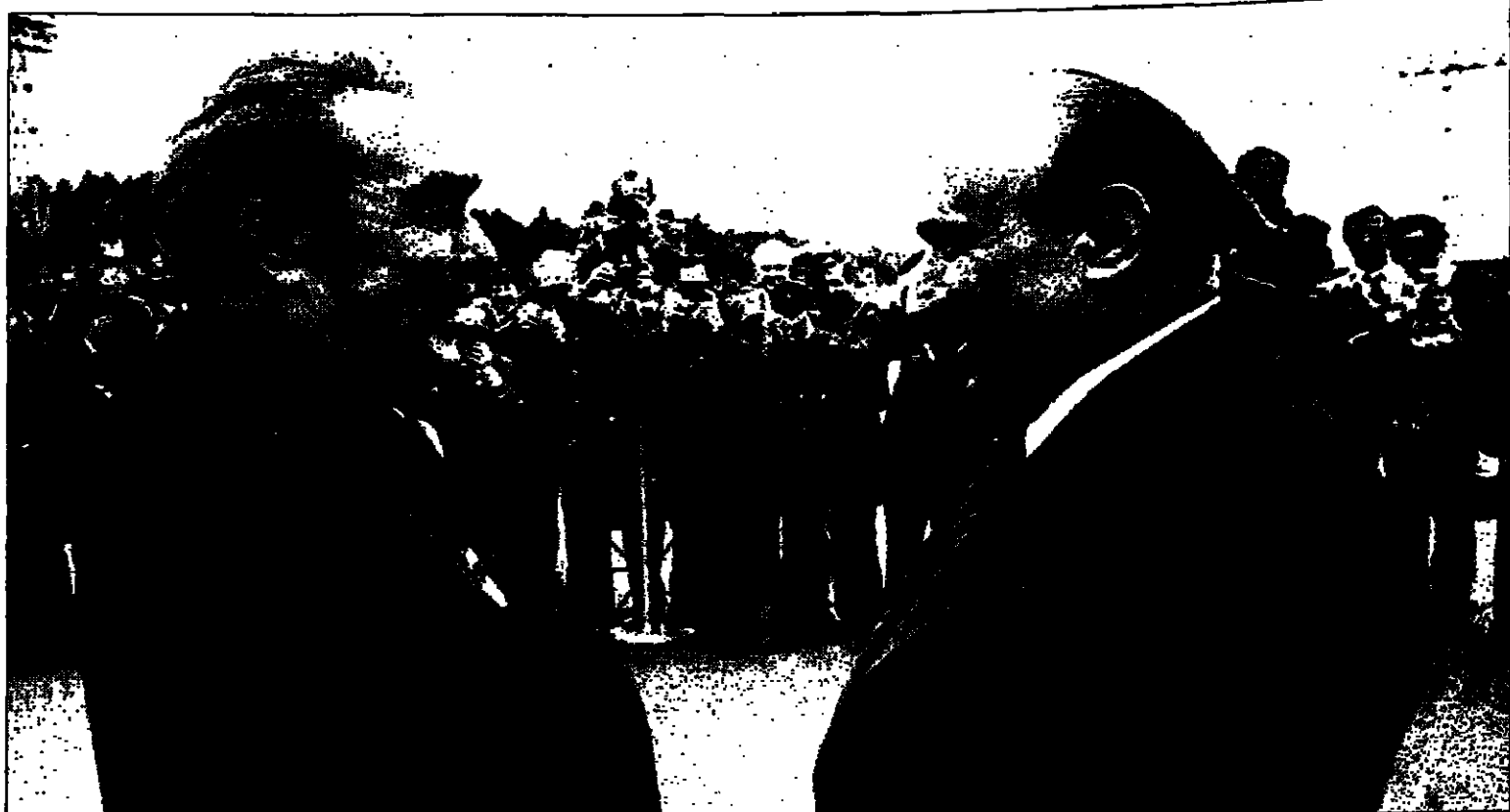
The state foreign trade bodies became front organisations for money-laundering. His son, Vladimir, enjoyed a reputation as a notorious womaniser, drunkard and gambler and was implicated in the death of a well-known female television presenter who fell from his balcony. His grandson was said to have taken part in the gang rape of an 18-year-old woman. Zhivkov and his chosen loyalists concentrated all politi-

cal as well as economic power in the hands of an inner-party clique. Economically, he left behind a modest Black Sea tourist industry that provided seaside holidays for the Russians and other Warsaw Pact countries, as well as earning some hard currency through western budget tour operators.

But Zhivkov's economic legacy was as grim as his political testament. On to what was essentially an agrarian economy he grafted huge, ambitious steel and chemical plants which promptly guzzled up state subsidies and became huge pollutants as well as large loss-makers.

By the time Zhivkov was unseated, he had saddled Bulgaria with a \$10 billion foreign debt that the country could not repay.

**B**Y THE late 1980s, Zhivkov, who had seen Khrushchev, Brezhnev, Andropov and Gorbachev come and go, was being to cope with the strange new breeze blowing across the Black Sea from Mikhail Gorbachev's Soviet Union. Ever canny and crafty, he sought to weather the looming storm by loudly proclaiming that Gorbachev was



Take me to your leader ... Leonid Brezhnev and Todor Zhivkov (right) exchange greetings at Moscow airport in 1977

merely aping the trendsetting Bulgaria where perestroika had long been set in train.

But younger rivals inside the party were plotting to unseat him. In the 1970s and 1980s Zhivkov embarked on a systematic campaign of harassment of the country's sizeable Turkish minority, denying that there were any Turks in Bulgaria and forcing them to change their names. By early 1989, a combination of persecution, fury, and fear

produced what was then — before the east German hemisphere later that year and before the ethnic cleansing of Bosnia — the biggest post-war mass movement of people: more than 300,000 Bulgarian Turks fled the country.

As the world was transfixed in November 1989 by the fall of the Berlin wall, Bulgaria's own little revolution occurred. Not so much a revolution as a palace coup. At a politburo meeting in Sofia on

November 9, Petar Mladenov, the former foreign minister, mustered enough votes to depose Zhivkov after having consulted the Gorbachev team in support for the coup. The Zhivkov era was over, although the country remained largely in the hands of the younger apparatchiks who once served him faithfully until 1996, when a wave of demonstrations and strikes brought the reformist Petar Stoyanov to power.

Fifteen months after he was removed from power, Zhivkov became the first of the Soviet bloc's former rulers to be put on trial — discounting the summary trial and execution of Nicolae Ceausescu in neighbouring Romania at Christmas 1989. He was tried for embezzlement; the trial continued for 16 months, and he eventually got a seven-year jail sentence for embezzling \$24 million and misappropriating state property. He

was not put in prison, however, merely ordered to remain under house arrest at the home of his granddaughter, railing incorrigibly against the judges who betrayed him, and protesting his innocence. He is survived by his son Vladimir.

**Ian Traynor**  
Todor Zhivkov, dictator, born September 7, 1911; died August 5, 1998

Christine Fell

## Bringing the voice of the Vikings to life

**C**HRISTINE Fell, who has died aged 80, was an expert in Old English and Old Norse whose influential book *Women in Anglo-Saxon England* (1984) had a readability that few other scholarly books could match.

Fell was born and educated in Louth, Lincolnshire. Her family later moved to the Hall at Slingsby, North Yorkshire, where she commissioned a dragon-head roof terminal (inspired by those in Norwegian churches) and an Anglo-

Saxon floor mosaic for the conservatory. The scene of memorable parties and the starting point for field trips with an appropriate balance of early medieval antiquities and real ale pubs.

Fell studied at the University of London, and completed her dissertation, an edition of the Old Icelandic saga of the Anglo-Saxon saint Dunstan, in 1961, after a year spent working with the manuscripts in Copenhagen. From then on, her career was marked by a strong interest

in the cultural interactions of the English and Scandinavian worlds, and by close contacts with Scandinavian scholars. This was recognised when she was awarded the Order of the Falcon by the president of Iceland in 1991.

Fell was a strong proponent of hands-on experience in historical study and she scrupulously trained her students in the same approach through study-visits to the Parker Library in Cambridge and the British Museum. She cultivated contacts with archaeol-

ogists, believing passionately that the study of words and objects should go hand in hand, and had more practical experience with a dipping lugul than most scholars of the Viking Age.

After lecturing posts in Ripon, Aberdeen and Leeds, Fell had a successful career at the University of Nottingham and became head of the department of English studies in 1980. With her own scholarly reputation firmly established, she concentrated on furthering the careers of

others, winning an appointment in Viking studies for her department. In 1992 she masterminded a successful application to the Leverhulme Trust for a project on the vocabulary of English place-names. As one of the few senior women in the system, she felt the responsibility of her position, becoming involved with the Academic Awards Committee of the British Federation of University Women and convening the Women in Higher Education Network from

1989. Fell believed in making her knowledge accessible and wrote the *soundtrack for the Jorvik Viking Centre* in York, with the children's voices provided by her nieces and other Slingsby schoolchildren. Her academic legacy lives on in the work of the many younger scholars she trained and encouraged.

**Judith Jesch**  
Christine Fell, academic, born February 23, 1938; died July 2, 1998

Letter: Zbigniew Herbert

**George Gomori of the University of Cambridge Department of Slavonic Studies writes:** I have known Zbigniew Herbert (obituary, August 3) for 40 years and admired his poetry long before it began to gain wider international recognition. He was a warm and kind man, with a deep understanding of history and European culture.

It was this understanding that helped him to ignore both the siren songs of post-war communism and withstand the pressures of the totalitarian regime. True, his situation had dramatically improved since 1956 — between 1958 and 1988 he probably spent more time abroad than in his native Poland; he lived for years in West Berlin and in Paris until his early seventies he taught for a while in California. For all his "semi-emigre" status Herbert continued to write in Polish, publishing mostly in Warsaw. The first Cogito poems (the "Cogito" as part of your obituary) were actually published in the late 1960s and only added to Herbert's already great popularity.

In English-speaking countries, already Al Alvarez has quoted poems of his in English translation (done by Czeslaw Milosz and Peter Dale Scott) in his seminal book of interviews *Under Pressure* (Penguin, 1989). I devoted several pages to Zbigniew Herbert's poetry in my *Polish and Hungarian Poetry 1945 to 1986* (Oxford, 1986). Apart from Milosz, it was mainly John and Bogdana Carpenter who translated and popularised Herbert's poetry with several collections published by OUP in 1977 and again in 1987. Due to their efforts Herbert's work has become well known on both sides of the Ocean — and merited a sensitive essay by Seamus Heaney in the *Guardian of the Tongue*. The Nobel Prize winning Irish poet here compares Herbert to the mythological Atlas who "shoulders the whole sky and scope of human dignity and responsibility".

While the Nobel Prize eluded Herbert (going instead to his very talented fellow Pole, Szymanowski), he also had his share of international recognition. In 1964 he was awarded the Kosciuszko Award, in 1965 the Jurzykowski Prize (New York), in later years the Lenau Prize and the prestigious Herder Prize. The best book on him in English is Stanislaw Baranowski's *A Fugitive from Utopia* (Harvard University Press, 1987).

Harry Armytage

## A teacher by example

**H**ARRY Armytage, who has died aged 82, was one of the outstanding educators of his generation. He was an inspiring teacher, original thinker, prolific researcher and writer and a notable administrator at the University of Sheffield where he was professor of education from 1964 to 1981 and pro vice-chancellor from 1964 to 1968.

For several years he wrote the introduction to *The Commonwealth Universities Year Book* — its vast overview and grasp of detail distilled in his inimitable, concise, lively prose. He also possessed a rare gift for defining contemporary issues against a large context. An article in the *New Statesman* canvassing the case for a University for Scunthorpe was famously controversial, but focused sharply the issue of where Britain needed to locate new universities.

Harry was born in Kimberley, South Africa, but lived in England from the age of 11. From Redruth county school

he went to Downing College, Cambridge, and took first class honours in history and education in 1930. He taught at Dronfield grammar school until the war, when he served as a captain in the London Irish Rifles in North Africa and Italy and was mentioned in dispatches.

Harry joined the University of Sheffield as a lecturer in education in 1946 and became professor in 1954; a well-earned rapid rise for he had already published *A Mindful: the Liberal Background of the Labour Movement*, 50 other scholarly articles, and had co-authored a life of Thomas Hughes, author of *Tom Brown's School-days*.

He wrote 12 more books covering historical themes about the relationships between science, technology, society and education including *Civic Universities: Aspects of a British Tradition* (1965), *The Rise of the Technocrats* (1965), and *Yesterday's Tomorrow: a historical survey of future societies* (1968). There were also four books on the



Armytage ... focused

influence of France, Germany, Russia and America on English education and *Four Hundred Years of English Education*, a standard text for post-graduate students.

As pro vice-chancellor he was at the centre of planning the post-Robbins expansion and as chairman of the staff-student committee after 1968 his stamina, patience and ability to defuse potential confrontation with constructive ways forward gave Sheffield an easier passage than most through those turbulent years. He was a member of many national committees including that setting up the *University of the Future* (now part of the University of Ulster) which conferred one of his several honorary degrees.

Students were spellbound by Harry's demonstration lessons and his lectures. His post-graduate tutorials were inspired with deep insight and vivid exposition. And his perception of people was uncanny: he once advised a would-be researcher not to do an MA but to try writing a story for the Beano. So began a career as an author and teacher of creative writing.

Admired abroad, especially in the US, he led numerous summer schools at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, and taught as a visiting professor at Newcastle, New South Wales. On retirement he held, for three years, the Gerald Reed professorship at Kent State University and in this country continued to work with the societies he loved, the Eugenics Society a particular interest.

His wife Frances, a historian of academic weight, also taught at Sheffield and was extraordinarily generous hosts: "We have Americans like some people have mice", Frances once remarked, though not unkindly. Harry's sparkling conversation, rich in anecdote, wisdom, humour and quotation was just one of the delights of home, friendship and common room.

**David Bradshaw**  
Walter Harry Green Armytage, educationist, born November 22, 1915; died June 13, 1998

CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

**WE WERE** wrong to state in an article (page 4, August 4) about students and the unemployed being signed up by researchers to take test dosages of pesticides that the OP Information Network (which is campaigning against such experiments) is funded by the Rowntree Trust. We should have said the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, which is a completely separate organisation from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and the Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust.

We apologise for any embarrassment caused to the trustees or staff of the three organisations.

**THE FAMILY** name of the character featured in the novels of Bill James is Elex, not Elex, as we said in an arts page article on crime writers (G2, page 12, August 3).

**It is the policy of the Guardian to correct errors as soon as possible. Please quote date and page number. Readers may contact the office of the Readers' Editor by telephoning 0177 239 9539 between 11am and 5pm, Monday to Friday. Letters should be addressed to: Readers' Editor, The Guardian, 119, Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER. Fax: 0177 239 9597. E-mail: reader@guardian.co.uk**

Death Notices

**DUMFRIES**, Howard Johnson Dumfries CBE, died on July 28. He was 85. He was a member of the Order of the British Empire. He was a member of the Order of the British Empire. He was a member of the Order of the British Empire.

**Tom Dent**, poet and civil rights campaigner, born 1932; died June 8, 1998

Birthdays

**Ronnie Biggs**, train robber, 68; **Greg Chappell**, cricketer, 50; **Prof Herbert Elvin**, educationalist, 93; **Matthew Evans**, chairman, Faber, 57; **Stan Freberg**, satirist, 72; **Rt Rev Andrew Graham**, bishop of Newcastle, 83; **Kenneth Kendall**, broadcaster, 74; **Sue Lloyd**, actress, 58; **Owen Luder**, architect, 70;

**Dame Ella Macknight**, obstetrician and gynaecologist, 94; **Peter Niven**, jockey, 34; **Matthew Parris**, journalist, broadcaster, 49; **Nick Ross**, broadcaster, 51; **Alexei Sayle**, comedian, 46; **Philip Snow**, author, 83; **Roger Stott**, Labour MP, 55; **John Young**, chairman, Young & Co Brewery, 77.

A Country Diary

**NORTHUMBERLAND:** To Kielder Forest for a strenuous walk. A flock of skinkins and two cat tits entertained us by the Lewis burn and at Bakhin reservoir we watched a goshawk hunting for food for her young. One of the wardens told us that in the same conifer plantation in which she was nesting, there was also a merlin and several buzzards on the perimeter. J.E. Morris, in his classic book on this county, describes a Kielder as "having a subtle and delightful flavour all its own, which can hardly be likened to any other moors in the kingdom". A sparrow hawk has been harassing my swallows and house martins. They have mud and spittle nests under the eaves of the house, have hatched a second brood and are in overdrive hawking for insects. At dusk,

the fledglings swoop about, showing off until scolded to return to their nests where the family cram in with much gossiping and shuffling. A cock wren has gone to the trouble of building a nest all on his own which must be a unique characteristic, although the lining and finishing touches were left to the hen bird. She sat on two eggs in the nest, hidden in the hydrangea creeper on the front of our house. Such a busy place as we are on the village street but I was thrilled when one baby hatched. It survived, began to feather, the parents were thrilled with pride, even Papa was lingering. I heard his call, resembling the squeaking of an unrolled hinge. Alas, after five days, a cat came over our gate and killed the chick. **VERONICA HEATH**

## Roma Cutlery Offer

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Three, not two, first-term Labour MPs have been promoted to ministerial rank. A feature in our finance section (page 20, August 1) should have included the name of Ross Cranston, the member of Parliament for Dudley, who has been appointed Solicitor General.

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مكتبة الجليل



# Nine months that will make or break Brown

Treasury mandarins hold key to the Chancellor's success, writes **Larry Elliott**

**T**HE list of Chancellors who have made the fatal error of believing Treasury forecasts is a long and illustrious one. Nigel Lawson was told by his number crunchers there would be no boom in 1989. There was. Norman Lamont was informed almost daily in 1991 that recovery from recession was just around the corner. It wasn't.

So, when Gordon Brown says he is confident that his Treasury mandarins have got it right and that the economy will enjoy a soft landing over the next year or thereabouts, it is a risk that Labour's first occupant of 11 Downing Street in almost two decades will be the latest victim of Whitehall over-optimism.

But, as he starts his summer break in Cape Cod, Mr Brown remains utterly convinced that the decisions he has taken in the 15 months since arriving at the Treasury have put Britain on the road to a stable economy that can deliver faster growth, more jobs and higher living standards. Thus: "We are breaking away from 40 years of boom-bust, the days of 15 per cent interest rates and odd years of strong growth but where we are unable to enjoy the sustained growth other countries have achieved because we haven't tackled the underlying and structural weaknesses in the economy."

To which the sceptic would reply, à la Mandy Rice-Davies, that we would say that wouldn't we? There is certainly no shortage of people who believe that the Chancellor has got it all spectacularly wrong.

But they are in a minority and, for the time being, their voices are muted. Wounded by the row over single-parent benefits, Mr Brown bounced back last month with the announcement of big increases

in health and education spending over the next three years.

And the man who really matters, the Prime Minister, believes that Mr Brown's long-term strategy is exactly what Britain needs after the frenetic roller-coaster ride of the past quarter-century. The next nine months will be pivotal, both for the economy and for the Chancellor's reputation. If the economy can survive the winter without sliding into recession, Mr Brown will emerge as the hero who punts Tony Blair on course for a second term. If the landing is hard rather than soft, the Chancellor will be the villain of the piece.

In an end-of-term interview with the Guardian, Mr Brown was upbeat. "My forecasts at the time of the pre-Budget report in November, the Budget in March and at the time of the public spending announcements have proved to be in line with what the economy is doing," he said.

"What I said last year was that there would be a justifiable and necessary slowdown in the economy this year to achieve the stability we need for sustained growth and jobs. I am confident that we are on track to avoid recession. We are forecasting 2 per cent growth this year and 1.75 per cent next year. The economy is performing as we expected it to do."

The strategy is that giving the Bank the power to set interest rates makes monetary policy more credible and less politically-charged. Inflation would be lower, leading to lower interest rates and higher investment. With the Government acting to tackle skills bottlenecks and Britain's productivity gap, the result will be enhanced economic performance.

"Making the Bank of England independent, with an open and accountable regime,

and setting up a fiscal regime based on published rules have created the possibility of long-termism for the first time in 40 years."

Yesterday, to sighs of relief all round, the Bank left interest rates on hold at 7.5 per cent. Asked how he would have voted had he been a member of the nine-strong Monetary Policy Committee, the Chancellor says it would not be right for him to comment on individual decisions by the committee. However, despite mounting criticism from industry and the unions that the Bank is out of touch with the real world and risks pushing the economy into recession by keeping interest rates too high, his faith in the new system is undimmed.

"We have got to move from the short-termism of spurts of growth followed by deep recessions to a more steady pattern," Mr Brown said.

"When I set up the Monetary Policy Committee, I said

**"We are breaking away from 40 years of boom-bust, the days of 15 per cent interest rates and odd years of strong growth, but where we are unable to enjoy the sustained growth other countries have achieved"**

"The Conservative attacks are a bundle of contradictions. On the one hand they say I have taxed too much; on the other that I have taxed too little."

"Fiscal tightening has been greater than anybody ever thought it would be when we came into power last May. We have held to the public spending totals for two years and taken action to reduce the deficit. There has been a £20 billion fiscal tightening,

the objectives of our economic policy were high levels of growth and employment. I back the Bank's decisions 100 per cent."

Although there has been criticism of the new decision-making process, not many people are suggesting returning to the old ad hoc and highly personalised system of setting rates. It was a great pity the Bank wasn't made independent six months before the last election.

The Chancellor rejects accusations that the Bank is stuffed full of ivory tower academics. "The people chosen have a good knowledge of the economy. The Bank is building up regional expertise and its court is now more representative of the regions."

With the Tories traumatised by their crushing election defeat, the Chancellor has had a pretty easy ride from the Opposition.

The main criticism from the new Shadow Chancellor, Francis Maude, is that Mr Brown has got fiscal policy all wrong and that the failure to raise taxes on consumers more aggressively in July last year and the 2.75 per cent increase in public spending for the last three years of the Parliament have meant higher-than-necessary interest rates. "Monetary and fiscal policy are more closely co-ordinated now than when they were under the control of one person," Mr Brown said.

"The Conservative attacks are a bundle of contradictions. On the one hand they say I have taxed too much; on the other that I have taxed too little."

"Fiscal tightening has been greater than anybody ever thought it would be when we came into power last May. We have held to the public spending totals for two years and taken action to reduce the deficit. There has been a £20 billion fiscal tightening,

the biggest since 1981."

The Chancellor says that the rapturously-received increases in health and education spending were evidence that the new approach to the economy was paying off. "We are proving by what we are doing that there is no conflict between policies to promote stability and policies to invest in good and strong public services," he said.

"Under the Tories the prevailing philosophy was that you could be prudent but only by cutting public services. Or that you could invest but only by being imprudent. That is an artificial dichotomy."

What could go wrong to spoil the Chancellor's plans for long-term stability? There are three obvious contenders. The first is pay, which is being closely monitored by the Bank, amid fears that rising earnings growth will prompt a renewed wage-price spiral.

"There is a risk on interest rates if we take pay rises that can't be afforded," Mr Brown said. "I don't think people realised at first that there is a different world now. In the past the inflation target did not matter. In the new world it can and will be met, either by wage responsibility or by

higher interest rates."

The second flashpoint could be the knock-on effects of the Asian crisis, which could make a nonsense of everybody's economic forecasts if it is transformed from a regional into a global crash. "We need to be highly vigilant during the coming year as the calls for protectionism will start," Mr Brown said.

Finally, there is the risk that the good old British economy is simply impervious to everything policy makers throw at it, and continues to be stuck in a low-growth, low-productivity trap. Having made welfare the centre-piece

of this year's Budget, next year's package is being designed to tackle Britain's productivity shortfall.

Mr Brown says it will include measures to reform labour markets, capital markets, and to boost investment and innovation. "We need more enterprise, more investment, more attention to productivity," he said.

This will not be achieved overnight and the strategy will take at least two terms to bear fruit. But the second term will materialise only if the Treasury whizz-kids have got their sums about the next nine months right.

## Interest rates 'have reached peak'

Mark Atkinson  
Economics Correspondent

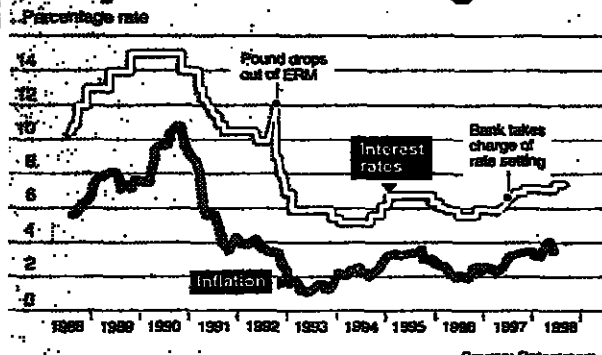
**I**NTEREST rates appeared to have peaked yesterday after the Bank of England's monetary policy committee left the cost of borrowing on hold as a Confederation of British Industry survey showed the slowest growth in retail sales for three years.

With evidence accumulating that growth is slowing and helping to contain inflationary pressure, analysts said chances of a further rate increase from the current level of 7.5 per cent were remote.

However, fears of triggering a sharp slide in the value of the pound, which could unleash a wave of import price rises, would ensure that next week's quarterly assessment of the inflation outlook by the MPC would remain relatively hawkish.

According to the CBI, 37 per cent of retailers said

### Ten years of rate setting



sales volumes were up on a year ago, while 31 per cent said they were down. The difference between those reporting growth and those who said sales had declined was 19 per cent in June and 25 per cent in May.

"The further slowdown in retail sales growth suggests consumers have been discouraged by a combination of high interest rates

and bad weather," said the CBI's Alastair Eperon. "The message of this survey is consistent with the balance of other data in indicating a slower pace of domestic demand. A further rise in interest rates would risk a much sharper slowdown than necessary to contain inflation."

Sterling eased slightly in the wake of the Bank's decision.

hitting a two-month low of 2.8840 against the mark. Analysts said further falls were likely in the months ahead.

"I think that that's it from the Bank of England, they won't hike any more," said Tony Norfield, chief economist at ABN-Amro in London. "Sterling is likely to go down. If interest rates go up, you kill the economy and sterling gets sold. If you don't raise rates, then you remove the one remaining support for the pound."

Analysts said the key question for the MPC is likely to be how rocky the pound falls. If it slides down gently as slowing growth creates slack in the economy, it is unlikely to present much of an inflationary risk.

But if it crashes before the slowdown has really taken hold, the MPC may be forced to push up rates again to secure the Government's 2.5 per cent inflation target.

## The sky falls on the silicon chip

The licence to print money has run out for the semiconductor industry. **Mark Milner, Nicholas Bannister and Geoffrey Gibbs report**

**F**ORECASTING is like forgetting your telephone number and then trying to estimate it, a senior executive of a leading semiconductor manufacturer once said.

Siemens would testify to the truth of this. The German company's north Tyneside plant is facing closure and its semiconductor division is on course for a loss this year of more than £100 million (£557 million).

NEC of Japan is cutting back investment spending globally and South Korea's Hyundai has mothballed a new plant in Scotland.

Back in 1985 one of the industry's most respected forecasters was predicting annual sales by this year of some \$200 billion (£126.5 billion). The figure is likely to be nearer \$140 billion. Thousands of Newcastle upon Tyne workers are set to pay the price for this with their jobs.

For some chips, the price has collapsed amid allegations of Korean manufacturers dumping the product at extremely low prices. Yet two years ago, says one industry observer, "a semiconductor plant was a licence to print dollars."

Boom has turned to bust and Britain has taken a heavy hit. The UK has more than its

share of semiconductor plants — more than 30. Most are relatively small and the majority foreign-owned.

The list of foreign investors includes America's Motorola and National Semiconductor and Japan's NEC and Fujitsu.

Scotland's Silicon Glen, the biggest grouping of factories, contains some of the best known names in the industry, including computer makers Compaq and IBM, and chip makers Motorola and NEC.

Siemens and Hyundai are now looking for buyers for their newly-built UK plants. Another Korean giant, LG, confirmed yesterday that it is pressing ahead with its £1.3 billion state-of-the-art computer chip factory in Newport, South Wales, expected to employ up to 1,000 people by December 1999.

"The Welsh plant is our first manufacturing venture outside Korea and remains a top priority," said an LG spokeswoman. "Our plans are unchanged." Directors are determined to build a European

bridgehead.

While foreign companies flourished until now, Britain has failed to create a home-grown semiconductor or computer industry. It participates largely through the largesse of foreign companies which took advantage of inward investment incentives.

ICL, created by the Labour government in the late 1960s to be the flagship of a British computer industry, is now in Japanese hands. Sir Peter Bonfield, the bright executive who ran it in recent years, left to run British Telecom.

The failure of ICL to fulfil its destiny accounts in large measure for Britain's second-class status in the league of hi-tech nations. A generation of UK managers noted ICL's high hopes and heavy losses, and fought shy of an industry with a prodigious capacity to swallow money.

For example, Immos, the South Wales company which developed the revolutionary computer on a chip, failed to find adequate UK backing and

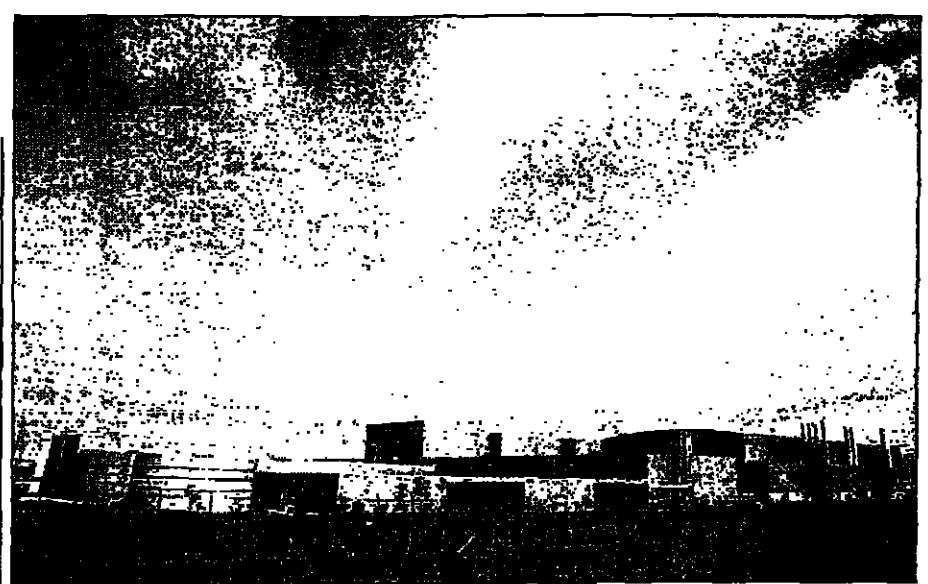
was taken over by SGS-Thomson, the Franco-Italian semiconductor group.

Making semiconductors is capital, rather than labour, intensive. A modern plant — known as a fab — now costs up to £2 billion, yet will only employ about 2,000 people. The bulk of the cost is in equipment.

The lines on a computer chip are now so fine — about one four-hundredths of a human hair — that a tiny speck of dust or flake of skin caught in the manufacturing process can ruin it. Manufacturing takes place in clean rooms where the air is replaced every six seconds.

"People are the biggest source of contamination," said a spokesman for Intel, the world's largest maker of computer chips. "Our clean rooms are a thousand times cleaner than the finest hospital operating theatres."

The cost of fabs is escalating. Intel's Republic of Ireland subsidiary has two at Leixlip, County Kildare. The



Closure threatens jobs at the Siemens plant on north Tyneside

PHOTOGRAPH: IAN DUNCAN

first, built in 1994, cost \$1 billion. The second, built four years later, cost \$1.5 billion. Wafers of chips are sent around the world to where workers are cheaper for the more labour-intensive work of mounting the individual chip in a ceramic case, with

appropriate connections. Advanced chips, like Digital's super-fast Alpha microprocessor, can take up to three months to make. But years can be spent developing a chip, frequently at costs reckoned in hundreds of millions of pounds. Intel, for ex-

ample, is reckoned to spend about a third of its annual \$2.5 billion research budget on developing new microprocessors. One manufacturer had a design team of 50 working for three years on a chip which never made production.

Bullish Brown... But has he made a fatal error?  
PHOTOGRAPH: MARTIN ARGLES

## Make or break time for Brown, page 15

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## FinanceGuardian

Household appliances not insured as year 2000 is a foreseeable risk

## No cover for millennium bug

Lisa Buckingham  
City Editor

**H**OMEOWNERS were warned yesterday that household appliances that fail because of the millennium bug will not be covered by insurance. The Association of British Insurers said: "Losses which occur as a direct result of the millennium bug will not be insured since it is a predictable and foreseeable event."

It is estimated that three quarters of the homes in the country — 24 million separate properties — have some form of contents insurance. But householders will not be able to claim if equipment such as personal computers, video recorders, microwave ovens, security or even central heating systems suddenly stops working at midnight 1999.

The warning follows a similar bulletin late last year to

industry in which the insurance sector said it would refuse to pay if UK businesses could not function because of millennium breakdowns.

Mark Boleat, director general of the ABI, told consumers: "Insurance is designed to cover the unpredictable and unforeseen. The millennium is neither — although some of the consequences may be. And it is these unpredictable

and unforeseeable events which some insurance policies will cover."

The insurers say they are unlikely to pay if:

- a car malfunctions because of a millennium-related defect;
- a holiday is cancelled or delayed;
- equipment covered by extended warranty policies stops working.

Although the exclusions and policy wordings vary from insurer to insurer, most of the reputable companies will pay up when millennium-related failures result in knock-on damage.

For example, if a microwave oven blows up because its chip fails at the millennium that will not be covered. But if that explosion causes a fire which burns down the

house then the insurance policy will provide cover.

The start from the ABI came as one of its leading members, Royal & Sun Alliance, warned that the confrontation between insurers and the public over millennium-related cover could create as much public hostility for the industry as the pensions mis-selling crisis.

The government-backed

Action 2000 accused some insurers of acting "unreasonably and obstructively" in their "unreasonable" refusal to cover. Gwyneth Flower, managing director of Action 2000, said: "As far as I am concerned, where an individual can show they have taken due care and responsible action to try to address the millennium problem then their insurance should remain wholly in force."

She applauded the efforts of some insurers to alert consumers to the limits of cover and to make allowances for policyholders who demonstrate that they have tried to minimise any problems.

"I'm not going to let this go," she said. "I understand that they don't want to expose themselves to unreasonable risks and people might have to agree to pay a bit more but I would hope we could persuade the insurance sector to come up with a coherent set of general principles behind their approach."

## Notebook

## One depression is quite enough



Edited by  
Mark Milner

**I**N terms of the global economy, yesterday's decision by the Bank of England's monetary policy committee is hardly earth-shattering. It may even fail to offer a reprieve to those parts of the economy which have suffered, though hardly in silence, from the strength of the pound.

But if the MPC's deliberations have, as yet, failed to produce the substantive response some of its critics would have liked, the decision may yet become symbolic. In a week during which stock markets on both sides of the Atlantic have suffered from a head attack of nerves, the sight of policy makers almost anywhere jacking up interest rates would be unwelcome to investors.

We will have to wait for another six weeks before we know whether or not the MPC actually looked at events in the equity markets in London and on Wall Street. The US Federal Reserve, however, may not have the luxury. Wall Street is growing ever more jittery. The outlook for corporate earnings simply does not justify the US market's rating. Even that most bullish of bulls, Prudential Securities' Ralph Acampora, has turned sour on the market. Second line stocks, he argues, are already in a bear market. Blue chips are set to follow.

Even if Mr Acampora is right, it does not follow that the sky will fall in on Wall Street. But there must be a significant risk that reassessment will easily turn into rout. If that happens policy makers (the Fed) will have to act.

The two great market meltdowns in history — 1929 and 1987 — have produced diametrically opposite policy responses. After the first, interest rates were raised and the US rushed into the Depression, dragging quite a bit of the rest of the world along with it. After the second, policy makers looked at what had happened previously and kept rates down and liquidity up. That was not without its economic downside. In Britain, for example, it helped to fuel

what later became known as the Lawson boom.

Given the choice, however, most of us know which we would prefer. The Grapes of Wrath needs only one reading. It is to be hoped the Fed's Alan Greenspan (and the MPC for that matter) has already got the message.

## Reasonable risk

**I**NSURANCE companies are not there to be fleeced whenever possible. They are certainly within their rights to try to make sure they are not exposed to unreasonable risks.

And it is little wonder that, faced with a once in a millennium catastrophe of quite unworkable proportions, their reluctance should be palpable.

Common sense suggests that responsible business will try to put their own millennium-bug problems in order in reasonable time. It would simply not be in the interests of a major bank, for example, to alienate millions of customers while chortling on about how the corporate insurance policy would pick up the tab.

Homeowners are a rather different case. It will be a huge task for them to get in touch with the manufacturers of the entire range of domestic appliances in order to assess whether they have chips and, if so, whether they are year-2000 compliant.

If they do so, however, and record the attempts made to eliminate potential trouble spots and pass a report on to the insurer, then policyholders should have the right to expect that their insurer will not refuse to write the risk. There may be a price for that cover and some homeowners will not want to pay more. But they should be given the option.

## Room at the top

**C**ORPORATE mergers too often resound to the crash of competing egos slamming into each other, rather in the manner of icebergs. Sometimes the clash wrecks the deal, sometimes one of the men at the top gets the push; sometimes the combined company is forced to design an uncomfortable management structure to allow the original management to drive in tandem.

Read Elsevier, however, has come up with an entirely new version of post-merger boardroom musical chairs. It has decided that it would be better if it united its two management boards under a single chief executive.

## Developer's scheme on course

## Wiggins gambles on race track for the City

Tony May

**A**FTER the rat-race: the horse race. The Wiggins property development group plans to build a new racecourse in east London expressly for jaded City and West End business types and their clients.

After a hard day selling sterling or property, Wiggins wants them to hop on the Central Line or nip along the M25 or M11 motorways to its proposed £100 million development at Fairlop Waters in the London borough of Redbridge. On 320 acres, it proposes three oval racecourses: one dirt and two grass — one Flat and one for jumping.

A programme of 70 fixtures a year, half of them mid-week and a large number floodlit, is envisaged and the Horseracing Board and Jockey Club are being consulted.

City slickers could fly in clients from overseas to the City of London airport, get them up at the proposed five-star hotel — or at the other, budget, hotel if there is a recession — offer tickets for the proposed leisure centre with multiplex cinema then entertain them at the racecourse after dinner at the restaurant.

That, at least, is the vision. Wiggins says the London business market has indicated that it will be extremely keen to be involved with its project in terms of both sponsorship



A day at the races... the Wiggins groups plans to attract City slickers to east London

PHOTOGRAPH: TOM JENKINS

and patronage. It argues that the sport — which is struggling to attract new money — will benefit from an influx of racegoers and says other courses will not suffer.

Geoff Lansbury, who is running the project for Wiggins said: "We plan to offer the London businessman a unique opportunity while providing the enormous local

market with racing on their doorstep."

The planning process has only just begun, however. At present the site is part of a 1,000-acre park complete with lake, nature reserve and adventure playground.

Wiggins is promising that none of the facilities will be affected and that some kind of golfing activity will be retained when the present

course disappears beneath the racetrack. The leisure and racing facilities will be used by the local community, the company says, and 1,000 new jobs will be created.

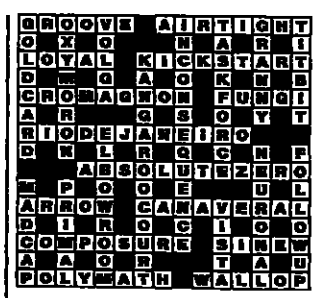
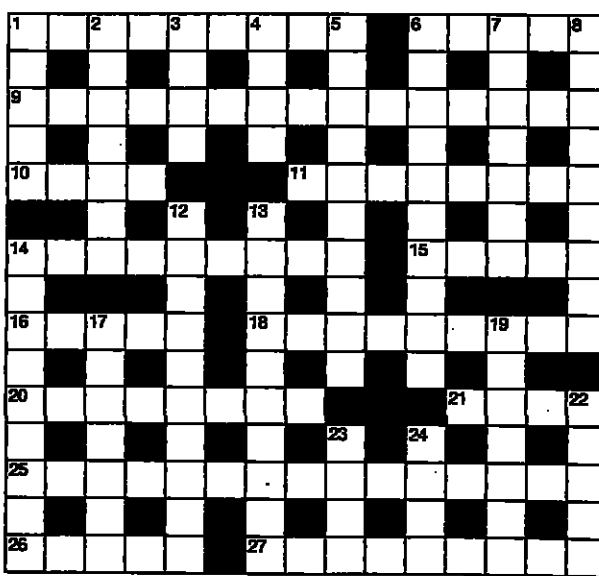
A rival plan by Arena, which owns the Lingfield and Folkestone racecourses, to build an all-weather track at Thurrock in Essex is not seen as a threat, as the Wiggins plan also includes grass

courses, which should appeal to the racing authorities, and has tube links which should appeal to the punters. Arena does already have agreed racing fixtures, however.

A planning application will not be made until a traffic and environmental impact assessment is completed but Wiggins hopes to start construction next year with the first race pencilled in for late 2000.

## Guardian Crossword No 21,347

Set by Audreus



CROSSWORD SOLUTION 21,346

## Across

- 1 Tales lid off a duetbin, turning over contents: by such was Wordsworth inspired? (9)
- 6 Heading for spring (5)
- 9 Outcome unpredictable when one is sworn to secrecy (3,5,3,4)
- 10 Number of French in a little knot (4)
- 11 Who said loudly: "Place a bet"? (Heard on the racetrack) (8)
- 14 Shrub to be processed. It's for hay (9)
- 16 Evaluate a continental strand (5)
- 18 Precipitation sounds to be the rule (5)
- 19 A pound for the pen? (9)
- 20 One holds firm, and youth gets the honour (8)
- 21 Be next to return the instrument (4)
- 22 Business getting behind; hell what a muddle (15)

- 26 Lament, for example, taking tree turn (5)
- 27 Dynamic backing for Geordie-land work unit; call around (9)

## Down

- 1 Scottish grandchild discovered in the sanctum sanctorum of a senior member (5)
- 2 Nothing in the cash dispenser maybe? — Be sunk (7)
- 3 Comply with address to the old governor (4)
- 4 In the same place as former goat (4)
- 5 Strangely seems a cat that must not be professed (10)
- 6 Patron leaning outside snack bar upset the soldiers (10)
- 7 Be not so profligate, it doesn't work (7)
- 8 Crockery dealer crazy about little feet on women (8)
- 12 Elgar bandy? Possibly, all things considered (2,3,5)
- 13 Too often used to walk around hospital undressed (10)

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## Transatlantic deal for Ocean

Ben Laurance

**B**RITAIN'S Ocean Group is poised to unveil a major deal in the US. The company is expected today to give details of a take-over to expand its air-freight forwarding operations.

The group will announce the acquisition of a Texas-based company, Skyking Freight Systems. News of the deal comes little more than a week after Ocean announced a tie-up with Caliber Logistics of the US, which handles ground-based freight movements.

Ocean, which last month unveiled a 14 per cent rise in half-year profits, has been trying for months to tie up a deal which would strengthen its businesses in North America.

around the world for multinational clients — was yesterday understood to be putting the finishing touches to the Skyking deal. An announcement is likely this morning.

Skyking arranges airfreight within the US. It specialises in meeting the needs of companies which are prepared to pay a premium in order to move goods quickly and reliably round the country.

The business will be dovetailed with Ocean's existing operations handling goods to and from the US.

The announcement is likely to show that Ocean is paying \$8 million (55 million) straight away for Skyking. A further \$16 million will be paid in 12 months time.

On top of that, the UK group is expected to pay another \$10 million in the future, the exact amount being dependent on Skyking's performance over the next five years.

Ocean refused to comment yesterday.

## Dome may hinder Mandelson's new job

Tony May and Simon Bewley

**P**ETER Mandelson admitted last night that he had been forced to take special legal advice to ensure his links with businesses backing the Millennium Dome would not prevent him from carrying out his new duties as Trade and Industry Secretary. He said that he might have to stand aside in some cases.

The admission slipped out last night as Mr Mandelson made his first high-profile intervention: releasing a ruling on the alliance between American Airlines and British Airways. BA is one of the biggest sponsors of the £758 million Dome.

Although Mr Mandelson has been assured by senior civil servants that he is free to act in cases involving Dome sponsors, the revelation will cause consternation coming so soon after the recent "cash for contacts" crisis.

Mr Mandelson has maintained his role overseeing the Dome. He acts as sole shareholder for the New Millennium Experience Company. His involvement is highly sensitive as given the fact that other sponsors of the Dome cover nearly every sector of the economy. BA has pledged \$6 million to the Dome; the airport operator BAA, \$4 million; BT, Tesco, Manpower and BSKYB, \$12 million. British Aerospace has said it will back the project but has given no figure. The Government hopes to sign up 60 business backers.

Referring to the BA case, Mr Mandelson said: "I have considered my position very carefully... and after taking advice from the permanent secretary of my department on the legal position, I am satisfied that I can exercise my responsibilities properly."

He conceded future competition cases would need careful handling. "I shall consider any further competition cases involving companies associated with the dome with similar care and shall stand aside if I cannot act, fairly and impartially."

The revelation came as Mr Mandelson published the latest advice from the Office of Fair Trading on the botched alliance between BA and AA on which he will have the final say.

The OFT advised that the companies should comply with conditions set out by the European Commission last month or face a referral to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. John Bridgeman, Director General of Fair Trading, believes the companies should be encouraged to sell off up to 287 weekly take-off and landing slots at Heathrow and Gatwick, while the commission has said the slots should be given up without compensation.

Another point in BA's favour is that the OFT wants the BA/AA alliance treated like any other venture between two carriers.

The regulatory authorities have spent nearly two years considering this key alliance and the process could continue into 1999 — when the Millennium Dome opens for business.